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125

COMMENTARIES

ON THE

TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS.

VOL. II.

JOEL, AMOS, OBADIAH.

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THE CALVIN TRANSLATION SOCIETY,

INSTITUTED IN MAY M.DCCC.XLIII.

FOR THE PUBLICATION OF TRANSLATIONS OF THE WORKS OF JOHN CALVIN.

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COMMENTARIES

ON THE

TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS.

BY JOHN CALVIN.

NOW FIRST TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN

BY THE REV. JOHN OWEN,
VICAR OF THRUSSINGTON, LEICESTERSHIRE.

VOLUME SECOND.

JOEL, AMOS, OBADIAH.

EDINBURGH:
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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THIS VOLUME contains the Writings of three Prophets. JOEL exercised his office among the Jews; AMOS, though a native of Judea, was yet appointed a Prophet of The Ten Tribes; and OBADIAH'S prophecy refers only to Edom.

The great master of Hebrew criticism, Bishop Lowth, speaking, in his twenty-first Prelection, of JOEL, says, that though he differs much in style from Hosea, he is yet "equally poetical." He represents him as "elegant, clear, diffuse, and flowing, and also very sublime, severe, and fervid." Admitting the perspicuity of his diction, and the clearness of his arrangements, he yet confesses that the matter which he handles is sometimes obscure, especially towards the end of his Prophecy.

With regard to the style of AMOS, the Bishop differs widely from Jerome, who has characterised the Prophet as "unskilful in speech, but not in knowledge," (imperitum sermone, sed non in scientiâ.) Lowth, on the contrary, regarded him as "not a whit behind the very chiefest Prophets, being in elevation of sentiment and nobleness of mind almost

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equal to the very first, and hardly inferior to any of them in splendour of diction and elegance of composition."[1]

Of OBADIAH nothing more is said by the Bishop than that he left but a small monument of his genius, and that a considerable portion of that is contained in the prophecy of Jeremiah. Of his composition Dr Henderson says, "Its principal features are animation, regularity, and perspicuity."

There is especially one subject in connection with the present Volume, which seems to require particular notice—THE INTERPRETATION OF THOSE PROPHECIES WHICH SPEAK OF THE FUTURE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS TO THEIR OWN LAND. CALVIN viewed some passages, as having been already accomplished in their return from Babylon, which in the estimation of others are yet to be fulfilled; while he interpreted those which evidently refer to what is future, in such a way as clearly shows that he did not consider that the Jews are to be restored again to their own country. That justice may be done to him, we must know and bear in mind the principles by which he was guided: for it is not to be supposed, that one so versed in Scripture, who had studied it with so much labour, and manifested, as it is commonly admitted, so much penetration and discernment as an expounder, would have taken such a view of this subject on slight grounds, without adopting a rule of interpretation, which, according to what he thought, was countenanced by Scriptural examples.

It must first be observed, that CALVIN, in common with others, regarded the history as well as the institutions of the people of Israel, as in great measure typical of things under

[1] —— Pastorem nostrum μηδεν ὑστερηκεναι των ὑπερ λιαν προφητων; ut sensuum elatione et magnificentia spiritus prope summis parem, ita etiam dictionis splendore et compositionis elegantia vix quoquam inferiorem.—*Lowth, Præl.* xxi.

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the Gospel. Their temporal evils and blessings, their temporal oppressions and deliverances, were intended to set forth the spiritual state and condition of the Christian Church. The free choice of the people by God, their Egyptian bondage, their passage through the wilderness, and their possession of the land of Canaan, were events symbolical of things connected with that spiritual community afterwards formed by the preaching of the Gospel; and of the same character was the subsequent captivity of that people in Babylon, and their restoration afterwards to their own land.

The next thing to be noticed is, that PROMISES OF BLESSINGS made to the people of Israel had in some instances a twofold meaning, and had reference to two things—the one temporal and the other spiritual. The restoration, for instance, from Babylon, was a prelude of the restoration or redemption by Christ. It was not only typical, but a kind of an initiative process, which was to be completed, though in a sublimer sense, by the Saviour of man. The first was a restoration from temporal evils; the second was still a restoration, but from evils of a spiritual kind. The performance of the promise, in one case, was the commencement of a restorative work, which was to be completed in the other: the temporal restoration was eventually succeeded by that which is spiritual.

But the most material point in interpreting the PROPHECIES is THE LANGUAGE WHICH IS USED: rightly to understand this language forms the main difficulty. There are Promises which, as admitted by CALVIN, look beyond the restoration from Babylon; and they are couched in terms, which, if taken literally, most evidently show that there is to be a second restoration. What is there, it may be asked, which can justify a departure from the letter of the promises? This

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is the chief question, on which the whole matter depends. CALVIN evidently thought that the literal sense cannot be taken, as that would be inconsistent with the general character of the ancient prophecies; for he considered that many of the prophecies, which relate to the Church of the New Testament, were conveyed in a language suitable to the institutions then existing, and in consistency with the notions which then prevailed, as to religion and divine worship. Hence the Temple, Mount Sion, sacrifices, offerings, the priests, as well as the restoration of the people to their own land, and their perpetual establishment in it, are often spoken of in those very promises which incontestably refer to the Gospel dispensation. Now, if in *some* cases, as confessed by most, if not by all, the language is not to be taken literally, but as representing the success, the extension and the blessings of the Gospel, why should it be taken literally in other similar cases? The possession of the land of Canaan was to the people of Israel one of their chief blessings, and was a signal token of the divine favour. Banishment from it was not only a temporal loss, but involved also the loss of all their religious privileges. Nothing, therefore, could have conveyed to their minds a higher idea of redemption than the promise of restoration to their own land, and a perpetual possession of it.

The foregoing seem to have been the views by which CALVIN was guided in his interpretation: and the Editor must be allowed to express his concurrence, though he is fully aware, that there have been, and that there are still, many celebrated men of a contrary opinion.

There is another idea which CALVIN suggests, in connection with this subject. He regarded THE PROMISES made in some instances by the Prophets as to the future prosperity of the people of Israel, and the perpetuity of their institu-

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tions and privileges, as CONDITIONAL, even when no condition is expressed. Instances of the same kind are to be found in the writings of Moses and of the earlier Prophets. Promises of perpetuity are made, (as for instance, respecting the priesthood,) and often unaccompanied by any conditions; and yet they were conditional, as the event proved, and in accordance with the tenor of the covenant under which the Israelites lived. The same view may also be taken of such promises as are found in the later Prophets, that is, such as bear on them a national stamp: they were announced unconditionally; but as they included blessings which belonged to the people as subjects of the Mosaic covenant, they were necessarily conditional, dependent as to their accomplishment on their obedience. Hence Jeremiah, who had himself announced promises of this kind, says, that the time would come when God would establish another covenant; and for this reason, because the people of Israel had broken the former covenant.

The Editor feels it to be his duty to say generally of CALVIN'S EXPOSITIONS, that the more maturely he considers them, after having compared them with those of others, both modern and ancient, the more satisfied he is with them, and the more he admires the acuteness and solid judgment they display. Perhaps no individual, possessing his high qualifications, natural, acquired, and spiritual, has ever, either in ancient or modern times, exercised himself so much in the study of the Holy Scriptures, and produced COMMENTS so original and so valuable.

What is remarkable in CALVIN as an Expositor is his unvarying attention to the context. This was his polar star, which enabled him to steer clear and safe through many intricacies and ambiguities as to the meaning of particular words,

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and even of sentences. His first object seems to have been to ascertain the general drift of a passage or of a chapter; and his next, to harmonise its several parts. There are many words which have various meanings, and the surest way of ascertaining their meaning in any given sentence, is to inquire what comports with the context. There is indeed no other way by which we can make a choice, when a word admits of different senses. Probably no Commentator has ever paid so much attention to this canon of interpretation as CALVIN did. The ground on which he almost at all times rejects a sense given by others to words or to sentences is, that it does not suit the place, or, to adopt an expression he frequently uses, that it does not square (*non quadrat*) with the passage.

It has been often thought that more difficulty attends the Hebrew language than other languages, owing to the variety of meaning which belongs to some of its words. But this variety exists quite as much, and indeed much more, in many other languages, and even in our own. What enables us in numberless instances to ascertain the meaning of a word, and even often of a sentence, is what stands connected with it, that is, the context. It is what goes before and comes after, not only in a sentence, but often in a long passage, that explains the precise meaning of many words. To transfer the meaning of a word from one passage to another, and to say that because it has a certain meaning in one place, it must have the same in another, (except the word has but one meaning,) is certainly not the way to explain Scripture or any other writing. The best expositor in this respect is no doubt the context.

It is well known that these LECTURES were delivered *extempore*, and were taken down by some of those who heard them; and we have them now as thus taken down, and afterwards corrected by CALVIN. This circumstance accounts for

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the occasional defect of order and for occasional repetitions. But these drawbacks seem to have been more than compensated by the freshness and vigour, the life and animation which these spontaneous effusions of his mind exhibit. In none of his other writings, as it appears to the Editor, has CALVIN shone forth with so much lustre as an able, clear, plain, and animated an Expounder, as in these LECTURES. There is a flow and energy to be found in them not equalled in those productions which he composed in private, and finished with more careful attention to order and style. When the mind is well stored and the memory retentive, as was the case in no ordinary degree with CALVIN, a public auditory has usually the effect of calling into action all the powers of the mind; and, as frequently in the present instance, the consequence is, that the finest and the most striking thoughts are elicited, and are expressed in a language the most energetic, calculated to produce the deepest impressions.

J. O.

THRUSSINGTON,
November, 1846.

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THE

COMMENTARIES OF JOHN CALVIN

ON THE

PROPHET JOEL.

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CALVIN'S PREFACE TO JOEL.

I PROCEED now to explain THE PROPHET JOEL. The time in which he prophesied is uncertain. Some of the Jews imagine that he exercised his office in the time of Joram, king of Israel, because a dreadful famine then prevailed through the whole land, as it appears evident from sacred history; and as the Prophet records a famine, they suppose that his ministry must be referred to that time. Some think that he taught under Manasseh, but they bring no reason for this opinion; it is, therefore, a mere conjecture. Others think that he performed his office as a teacher not only under one king, but that he taught, at the same time with Isaiah, under several kings.

But as there is no certainty, it is better to leave the time in which he taught undecided; and, as we shall see, this is of no great importance. Not to know the time of HOSEA would be to readers a great loss, for there are many parts which could not be explained without a knowledge of history; but as to JOEL there is, as I have said, less need of this; for the import of his doctrine is evident, though his time be obscure and uncertain. But we may conclude that he taught at Jerusalem, or at least in the kingdom of Judah. As Hosea was appointed a Prophet to the kingdom of Israel, so Joel had another appointment; for he was to labour especially among the Jews, and not among the Ten Tribes: this deserves to be particularly noticed.

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Now the sum of the Book is this: At the beginning, he reproves the stupidity of the people, who, when severely smitten by God, did not feel their evils, but on the contrary grew hardened under them: this is one thing. Then he threatens far more grievous evils; as the people became so insensible under all their punishments, that they were not humbled, the Prophet declares that there were evils at hand much worse than those they had hitherto experienced: this is the second thing. Thirdly, he exhorts the people to repentance, and shows that there was required no common evidence of repentance; for they had not lightly offended God, but by their perverseness provoked him to bring on them utter ruin: since, then, their obstinacy had been so great, he bids them to come as suppliants with tears, with sackcloth, with mourning, with ashes, that they might obtain mercy; for they were unworthy of being regarded by the Lord, except they thus submissively humbled themselves: this is the third subject. The fourth part of the Book is taken up with promises; for he prophesies of The Kingdom of Christ, and shows, that though now all things seemed full of despair, yet God had not forgotten the covenant he made with the fathers; and that therefore Christ would come to gather the scattered remnants, yea, and to restore to life his people, though they were now lost and dead.

This is the sum and substance. But we shall see, as we proceed, that THE CHAPTERS have been absurdly and foolishly divided. He thus begins—

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COMMENTARIES

ON

THE PROPHET JOEL.

CHAPTER I.

Lecture Thirty-eighth.

1. The word of the Lord that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel.

2. Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?

3. Tell ye your children of it, and *let* your children *tell* their children, and their children another generation.

4. That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.

1. Verbum Jehovæ quod fuit ad Joel, filium Pethuel.

2. Audite hoc senes, et auscultate omnes incolæ terræ, an fuerit hoc diebus vestris, et si diebus patrum vestrorum.

3. Super hoc filiis vestris narrate, et filii vestri filiis suis, et filii ipsorum generationi posteræ.

4. Residuum locustæ comedit (*est alia species*) bruchus (*ita ponamus, quoniam non possumus certò scire quænam fuerint istæ species*) et residuum bruchi comedit locusta, et residuum locustæ comedit eruca (*alii primo loco ponunt* Erucam, *est propriè* chenille, *et puto potius esse hoc posterius. Picardi vocant* casee, *quasi* חסיל: *verisimile est deductum fuisse nomen illud vulgare ab Hebræis, quia est ferè idem: sed tamen ego non anxiè sudo in istis nominibus, quia de sensu Prophetæ satis constabit. Nunc venio ad inscriptionem libri.*)

The word of Jehovah which came to Joel, the son of Pethuel. He names here his father; it is hence probable that he was

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a man well known and of some celebrity. But who this Pethuel was, all now are ignorant. And what the Hebrews hold as a general rule, that a prophet is designated, whenever his father's name is added, appears to me frivolous; and we see how bold they are in devising such comments. When no reason for any thing appears to them, they invent some fable, and allege it as a divine truth. When, therefore, they are wont thus to trifle, I have no regard for what is held by them as a rule. But yet it is probable, that when the Prophets are mentioned as having sprung from this or that father, their fathers were men of some note.

Now what he declares by saying, that he delivered the word of the Lord, is worthy of being observed; for he shows that he claimed nothing for himself, as an individual, as though he wished to rule by his own judgment, and to subject others to his own fancies; but that he relates only what he had received from the Lord. And since the Prophets claimed no authority for themselves, except as far as they faithfully executed the office divinely committed to them, and delivered, as it were from hand to hand, what the Lord commanded, we may hence feel assured that no human doctrines ought to be admitted into the Church. Why? Because as much as men thrust in themselves, so much they take away from the authority of God. This preface then ought to be noticed, which almost all the Prophets use, namely, that they brought nothing of their own or according to their own judgment, but that they were faithful dispensers of the truth intrusted to them by God.

And the word is said to have been to Joel; not that God intended that he alone should be his disciple, but because he deposited this treasure with him, that he might be his minister to the whole people. Paul also says the same thing,—that to the ministers of the Gospel was committed a message for Christ, or in Christ's name, to reconcile men to God, (2 Cor. v. 20;) and in another place he says, 'He hath deposited with us this treasure as in earthen vessels,' (2 Cor. iv. 7.) We now understand why Joel says, that the word of the Lord was delivered to him; it was not that he might be the only

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disciple; but as some teacher was necessary, Joel was chosen to whom the Lord committed this office. Then the word of God belongs indeed indiscriminately to all; and yet it is committed to Prophets and other teachers; for they are, so to speak, as it were trustees (*depositarii*—depositaries.)

As to the verb הָיָה, *eie*, there is no need of philosophising so acutely as Jerome does: "How was the word of the Lord made?" For he feared lest Christ should be said to be made, as he is the word of the Lord. These are trifles, the most puerile. He could not, however, in any other way get rid of the difficulty but by saying that the word is said to be made with respect to man whom God addresses, and not with respect to God himself. All this, as ye must see, is childish; for the Prophet says here only, that the word of the Lord was sent to him, that is, that the Lord employed him as his messenger to the whole people. But after having shown that he was a fit minister of God, being furnished with his word, he speaks authoritatively, for he represented the person of God.

We now see what is the lawful authority which ought to be in force in the Church, and which we ought to obey without dispute, and to which all ought to submit. It is then only that this authority exists, when God himself speaks by men, and the Holy Spirit employs them as his instruments. For the Prophet brings not forward any empty title; he does not say that he is a high priest of the tribe of Levi, or of the first order, or of the family of Aaron. He alleges no such thing, but says that the word of God was deposited with him. Whosoever then demands to be heard in the Church, must of necessity really prove that he is a preacher of God's word; and he must not bring his own devices, nor blend with the word any thing that proceeds from the judgment of his own flesh.

But first the Prophet reproves the Jews for being so stupid as not to consider that they were chastised by the hand of God, though this was quite evident. Hence they pervert, in my judgment, the meaning of the Prophet, who think that punishments are here denounced which were as yet sus-

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pended; for they transfer all these things to a future time. But I distinguish between this reproof and the denunciations which afterwards follow. Here then the Prophet reproaches the Jews, that having been so severely smitten, they did not gain wisdom; and yet even fools, when the rod is applied to their backs, know that they are punished. Since then the Jews were so stupid, that when even chastised they did not understand that they had to do with God, the Prophet justly reproves this madness. *Hear*, he says, *ye old men; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land, and declare this to your children.* But the consideration of this passage I shall put off till to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as almost the whole world give such loose reins to their licentiousness, that they hesitate not either to despise or to regard as of no value thy sacred word,—Grant, O Lord, that we may always retain such reverence as is justly due to it and to thy holy oracles, and be so moved, whenever thou deignest to address us, that being truly humbled, we may be raised up by faith to heaven, and by hope gradually attain that glory which is as yet hid from us. And may we at the same time so submissively restrain ourselves, as to make it our whole wisdom to obey thee and to do thee service, until thou gatherest us into thy kingdom, where we shall be partakers of thy glory, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Thirty-ninth.

Hear this, ye old men; and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land: has this been in your days, and in the days of your fathers? This declare to your children, and your children to their children, and their children to the next generation: the residue of the locust hath the chafer eaten, and the residue of the chafer hath the cankerworm eaten, and the residue of the cankerworm hath the caterpillar eaten.[1] I have in the last Lecture

[1] All these are different kinds of locusts. There are in Hebrew *ten* names for them, designative probably of so many kinds. There are four here: גזם, *gizam*, the young locust; ארבה, *arebe*, so called from their

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already mentioned what I think of this passage of the Prophet. Some think that a future punishment is denounced; but the context sufficiently proves that they mistake and pervert the real meaning of the Prophet; for, on the contrary, he reproves here the hardness of the people,—that they felt not their plagues. And as men are not easily moved by God's judgments, the Prophet here declares that God had executed such a vengeance as could not be regarded otherwise than miraculous; as though he said, "God often punishes men, and it behoves them to be attentive as soon as he raises up his finger. But common punishments are wont to be unheeded; men soon forget those punishments to which they have been accustomed. God has, however, treated you in an unusual manner, having openly as it were put forth his hand from heaven, and brought on you punishments nothing less than miraculous. Ye must then be more than stupid, if ye perceive not that you are smitten by God's hand." This is the true meaning of the Prophet, and may be easily gathered from the words.

Hear, ye old men, he says. He expressly addresses the old, because experience teaches men much; and the old, when they see any thing new or unusual, must know, that it is not according to the ordinary course of things. He who has past his fiftieth or sixtieth year, and sees something new happening which he had never thought of, doubtless acknowledges it as the unusual work of God. This is the reason why the Prophet directs here his discourse to the old; as though he said, "I will not terrify you about nothing; but let the old hear, who have been accustomed for many years to many revolutions; let them now answer me, whether in their whole life, which has been an age on the earth, have they seen any such thing." We now perceive the design of the Prophet; for he intended to awaken the Jews that they might understand that God had put forth his hand from heaven, and that it was impossible to ascribe what they had seen with their

number, one on the wing; ילק, *ilak*, one of the hairy bristly kind; and חסיל, *chesil*, one unfledged. Following the probable ideal meaning of the words, we may give them these names,—the *cutter*, the *multiplier*, the *licker*, and the *devourer*.—*Ed.*

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eyes to chance or to earthly causes, but that it was a miracle. And his object was to make the Jews at length ashamed of their folly in not having hitherto been attentive to God's punishments, and in having always flattered themselves, as though God slept in heaven, when yet he so violently thundered against them, and intended by an extraordinary course to move them, that they might at last perceive that they were summoned to judgment.

He afterwards adds, *And all ye inhabitants of the land.* Had the Prophet addressed only the old, some might seize on some pretext for their ignorance; hence he addressed all, from the least to the greatest; and this he did, that the young might not exempt themselves from blame in proceeding in their obstinacy and in thus mocking God, when he called them to repentance. *Hear*, he says, *all ye inhabitants of the land; hath this been in your days, or in the days of your fathers?* He says first, hath such a thing been in your days, for doubtless what happens rarely deserves a greater consideration. It is indeed true that foolish men are blind to the daily works of God; as the favour of God in making his sun to rise daily is but little thought of by us. This happens through our ingratitude; but our ingratitude is doubled, and is much more base and less excusable, when the Lord works in an unwonted manner, and we yet with closed eyes overlook what ought to be deemed a miracle. This dulness the Prophet now reproves, "Has such a thing," he says, "happened in your days, or in the days of your fathers? Ye can recall to mind what your fathers have told you. It is certain that for two ages no such thing has happened. Your torpidity then is extreme, since ye neglect this judgment of God, which from its very rareness ought to have awakened your minds."

He then adds, *Tell it to your children, your children to their children, their children to the next generation.* In this verse the Prophet shows that the matter deserved to be remembered, and was not to be despised by posterity, even for many generations. It appears now quite clear that the Prophet threatens not what was to be, as some interpreters think; it would have been puerile: but, on the contrary, he expostulates here

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with the Jews, because they were so slothful and tardy in considering God's judgments; and especially as it was a remarkable instance, when God employed not usual means, but roused, and, as it were, terrified men by prodigies. *Of this* then *tell:* for עליה, *olie*, means no other thing than 'tell or declare this thing to your children;' and further, *your children to their children.* When any thing new happens, it may be, that we are at first moved with some wonder; but our feeling soon vanishes with the novelty, and we disregard what at first caused great astonishment. But the Prophet here shows, that such was the judgment of God of which he speaks, that it ought not to have been overlooked, no, not even by posterity. *Let your children,* he says, *declare it* to those after them, and their children to the fourth generation: it was to be always remembered.

He adds what that judgment was,—that the hope of food had for many years disappointed them. It often happened, we know, that locusts devoured the standing corn; and then the chafers and the palmerworms did the same: these were ordinary events. But when one devastation happened, and another followed, and there was no end; when there had been four barren years, suddenly produced by insects, which devoured the growth of the earth;—this was certainly unusual. Hence the Prophet says, that this could not have been chance; for God intended to show to the Jews some extraordinary portent, that even against their will they might observe his hand. When any thing trifling happens, if it be rare, it will strike the attention of men; for we often see that the world makes a great noise about frivolous things. "But this wonder," says the Prophet, "ought to have produced effect on you. What then will ye do, since ye are starving, and the causes are evident; for God has cursed your land, and brought these insects, which have consumed your food before your eyes? Since it is so, it is surely the time for you to repent; and you have been hitherto very regardless, having overlooked God's judgments, which have been so remarkable and so memorable." Let us now proceed.

5. Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, be-	5. Expergiscimini ebrii et flete; et ululate omnes qui bibitis vinum

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cause of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.

super musto, quia excisum est ab ore vestro.

The Prophet adds this verse for the sake of amplifying; for when God sees men either contemptuously laughing at or disregarding his judgments, he derides them; and this mode the Prophet now adopts. 'Ye drunkards,' he says, 'awake, and weep and howl.' In these words he addresses, on the subject in hand, those who had wilfully closed their eyes to judgments so manifest. The Jews had become torpid, and had covered themselves over as it were with hardness; it was then necessary to draw them forth as by force into the light. But the Prophet accosts the drunkards by name; and it is probable that this vice was then very common among the people. However that might be, the Prophet by mentioning this instance shows more convincingly, that there was no pretence for passing by things, and that the Jews could not excuse their indifference, if they took no notice; for the very drunkards, who had degenerated from the state of men, did themselves feel the calamity, for the wine had been cut off from their mouth. And this expression of the Prophet, *Awake*, ought to be noticed; for the drunkards, even while awake, are asleep, and also spend a great portion of time in sleep. The Prophet had this in view, that men, though not endued with great knowledge, but even void of common sense, could no longer flatter themselves; for the very drunkards, who had wholly suffocated their senses, and had become thus estranged in their minds, did yet perceive the judgment of God; though drowsiness held them bound, they were yet constrained to awake at such a manifest punishment. "What then does this ignorance mean, when ye see not that you are smitten by God's hand?"

To the same purpose are the words, *Weep and howl.* Drunkards, on the contrary, give themselves up to mirth, and intemperately indulge themselves; and there is nothing more difficult than to make them to feel sorrow; for wine so infatuates their senses, that they continue to laugh in the greatest calamities. But the Prophet says, *Weep and howl*, ye drunkards! What then ought sober men to do? He then adds, *Cut off is the wine from your mouth.* He says not, "The use

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of wine is taken away from you;" but he says, *from your mouth.* Though no one should think of vineyards or of wine-cellars or of cups, yet they shall be forced, willing or unwilling, to feel the judgment of God in their mouth and in their lips. This is what the Prophet means. We then see how much he aggravates what he had said before: and we must remember that his object was to strike shame into the people, who had become thus torpid with regard to God's judgments.

As to the word עָסִיס, *osis*, some render it new wine. עָסַס, *osas*, is to press; and hence עָסִיס, *osis*, is properly the wine that is pressed in the wine-vat. New wine is not what is drawn out of the bottle, but what is pressed out as it were by force. But the Prophet, I have no doubt, includes here under one kind every sort of wine. Let us go on.

6. For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth *are* the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek-teeth of a great lion.

7. He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig-tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast *it* away; the branches thereof are made white.

6. Quia gens ascendit super terram meam, robusta et absque numero, dentes ejus dentes leonis, et maxillæ (*alii vertunt*, molares) leonis illis (*quanquam aliud est nomen: alii vertunt*, leunculum.)

7. Posuit vineam meam in vastitatem (*vel*, desolationem) et ficulneam meam in decorticationem: nudando nudavit eam et disjecit, albi facti sunt rami ejus.

Of what some think, that punishment, not yet inflicted, is denounced here on the people, I again repeat, I do not approve; but, on the contrary, the Prophet, according to my view, records another judgment of God, in order to show that God had not only in one way warned the Jews of their sins, that he might restore them to a right mind; but that he had tried all means to bring them to the right way, though they proved to have been irreclaimable. After having then spoken of the sterility of the fields and of other calamities, he now adds that the Jews had been visited with war.[1] Surely

[1] But most commentators consider these two verses as containing a more particular description of the devastations produced by the locusts mentioned before. That they are called "a nation" is according to prophetic style, and what has been done by heathen poets: the wasting of the vine and the barking of the fig-tree seem more suitable to this view. It is true that גוי, nation, and not עם, people, as in Prov. xxx. 25,

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famine ought to have touched them, especially when they saw that evils, succeeding evils, had happened for several years contrary to the usual course of things, so that they could not be imputed to chance. But when God brought war upon them, when they were already worn out with famine, must they not have been more than insane in mind, to have continued astonied at God's judgments and not to repent? Then the meaning of the Prophet is, that God had tried, by every means possible, to find out whether the Jews were healable, and had given them every opportunity to repent, but that they were wholly perverse and untameable.

Then he says, *Verily a nation came up.* The particle כִּי, *ki*, is not to be taken as a causative, but only as explanatory, *Verily*, or surely, he says, *a nation came up;* though an inference also is not amiss, if it be drawn from the beginning of the verse: 'Hear, ye old men, and tell your children;' what shall we tell? even this, that a nation, &c. But in this form also כִּי, *ki*, would be exegetical, and the sense would be the same. This much as to the meaning of the passage.

A nation, then, *came up over my land.* God here justly claims the land of Canaan as his own heritage, and does so designedly, that the Jews might more clearly know that he was angry with them; for their condition would not have been worse than that of other nations, had not God resolved to punish them for their sins. There is here then an implied comparison between Judea and other countries, as though the Prophet said, "How comes it, that your land is wasted by wars and many other calamities, while other countries are at rest? This land is no doubt sacred to God, for he has chosen it for himself, that he might rule in it; he has here his own habitation: it then must be that there is some cause for God's wrath, as your land is so miserably wasted, when other lands enjoy tranquillity." We now perceive what the Prophet means. *A nation*, he says, *came up upon my land*, and what then? God could surely have prevented this; he could have defended his own land, of which he was the keeper, and which

is here used; but, as Dr Henderson observes, it seems to have been selected on purpose "to prepare the minds of the Jews for the allegorical use made of these insects in chap. ii."—*Ed.*

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was under his protection: how then had it happened that enemies with impunity inundated this land, having marched into it and utterly laid it waste, except that it had been forsaken by the Lord himself?

A nation, he says, *came up upon my land, strong and without number*; and further, *who had the teeth of a lion, the jaw-bones of a young lion*. The nations had no strength which God could not in an instant have broken down, nor had he need of mighty auxiliaries, for he could by a nod only have reduced to nothing whatever men might have attempted: when, therefore, the Assyrians so impetuously assailed the Jews, they were necessarily exposed to the wantonness of their enemies, for they were unworthy of being protected, as hitherto, by the hand of God.

He afterwards adds, that *his vine had been exposed to desolation and waste, his fig-tree to the stripping of the bark*. God speaks not here of his own vine, as in some other places, in which he designates his Church by this term; but he calls everything on earth his own, as he calls the whole race of Abraham his children: and he thus reproaches the Jews for having reduced themselves to such wretchedness through their own fault; for they would have never been spoiled by their enemies, had not God, who was wont to defend them, previously rejected them; for there was nothing in their land which he did not claim as his own; as he had chosen the people, so he had consecrated the land to himself. Whatsoever, then, existed in Judea, was, as it were, sacred to God. Now when both the vines and the fig-trees were exposed to the depredations of the unbelieving, it was certain that God no longer ruled there. How so? Even because the Jews had expelled him. He afterwards enlarges on the same subject; for what follows, *By denuding he hath denuded it and cast it away*, is not a mere narrative; the Prophet here declares not simply what had taken place; but as we have already said, adduces more proof, and tries to awaken the drowsy senses of the people, yea, to arouse them from that lethargy by which the minds of all had been seized; hence it is that he uses in his teaching so many expressions. This is the reason why he says that the vine and the fig-tree had been denuded, and

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also that the leaves had been taken away, that the branches had been made bare and white; so that there remained neither produce nor growth.

Many interpreters join these three verses with the former, as if the Prophet now expressed what he had said before of the palmerworm, the chafer, and the locust; for they think that he spake allegorically when he said, that all the fruits of the land had been consumed by the locusts and the chafers. They therefore add, that these locusts, or chafers, or the palmerworms, were the Assyrians, as well as the Persians and the Greeks, that is, Alexander of Macedon and the Romans: but this is wholly a strained view, so that there is no need of a long argument; for any one may easily perceive that the Prophet mentions another kind of punishment, that he might in every way render the Jews inexcusable, who were not roused by judgments so multiplied, but remained still obstinate in their vices. Let us now proceed.

8. Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.

8. Plange tanquam puella, accincta sacco, super marito adolescentiæ suæ.

The Prophet now addresses the whole land. *Lament*, he says; not in an ordinary way, but like a widow, whose husband is dead, whom she had married when young. The love, we know, of a young man towards a young woman, and so of a young woman towards a young man, is more tender than when a person in years marries an elderly woman. This is the reason that the Prophet here mentions the husband of her youth; he wished to set forth the heaviest lamentation, and hence he says, "The Jews ought not surely to be otherwise affected by so many calamities, than a widow who has lost her husband while young, and not arrived at maturity, but in the flower of his age." As then such widows feel bitterly their loss, so the Prophet has adduced their case.

The Hebrews often call a husband בעל, *bol*, because he is the lord of his wife and has her under his protection. Literally it is, "For the lord of her youth;" and hence it is, that they also called their idols בעלים, *bolim*, as though they were,

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as we have often said in our comment on the Prophet Hosea, their patrons.

The sum of the whole is, That the Jews could not have continued in an unconcerned state, without being void of all reason and discernment; for they were forced, willing or unwilling, to feel a most grievous calamity. It is a monstrous thing, when a widow, losing her husband when yet young, refrains from mourning. Now then, since God had afflicted his land with so many evils, he wished to bring on them, as it were, the grief of widowhood. It follows—

9. The meat-offering and the drink-offering is cut off from the house of the Lord; the priests, the Lord's ministers, mourn.

9. Succisa est oblatio et libamen è domo Jehovæ: luxerunt sacerdotes, ministri Jehovæ.

Here, in other words, the Prophet paints the calamity; for, as it has been said, we see how great is the slowness of men to discern God's judgments; and the Jews, we know, were not more attentive to them than we are now. It was, therefore, needful to prick them with various goads, as the Prophet now does, as though he said, "If ye are not now concerned for want of food, if ye consider not even what the very drunkards are constrained to feel, who perceive not the evil at a distance, but taste it in their lips—if all these things are of no account with you, do at least look on the temple of God, which is now destitute of its ordinary services; for through the sterility of your fields, through so great a scarcity, neither bread nor wine is offered. Since then ye see that the worship of God has ceased, how is it ye yourselves still remain? Why is it that ye perceive not that God's fury is kindled against you? For surely except God had been most grievously offended, he would at least have had some regard for his own worship; he would not have suffered his temple to remain without sacrifices."

The Jews, we know, daily poured their libations, and offered meat-offerings. When, therefore, Joel mentions מנחה, *meneche*, and libation, he doubtless meant to show that the worship of God was nearly abolished. But God would have never permitted such a thing, had he not been grievously offended

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by the sins of men. Hence the indifference, or rather the stupidity of the people, is more clearly proved, inasmuch as they perceived not the signs of God's wrath made evident even in the very temple. It follows—

10. The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth.

10. Vastatus est ager, luxit terra (*hoc est*, luxerunt terræ incolæ;) quia vastatum est (*idem est verbum*, *vel*, quia periit) frumentum, aruit (*est à verbo* יבש, *non à* בוש, *quod significat pudefacere: quanquam utraque radix significationem hanc admittit apud Hebræos:* quia *ergo* aruit) mustum et exterminatum est (infirmatum *ad verbum, ab* אמל; *sed significat debilitatum esse*) oleum.

The Prophet goes on here with the same subject, and uses these many words to give more effect to what he said; for he knew that he addressed the deaf, who, by long habit, had so hardened themselves that God could effect nothing, at least very little, by his word. This is the reason why the Prophet so earnestly presses a subject so evident. Should any one ask what need there was of so many expressions, as it seems to be a needless use of words; I do indeed allow that all that the Prophet wished to say might have been expressed in one sentence, as there is here nothing intricate: but it was not enough that what he said should be understood, except the Jews applied it to themselves, and perceived that they had to do with God; and to make this application they were not disposed. It is not then without reason that the Prophet labours here, and enforces the same thing in many words.

Hence he says, *The field is wasted, and the land mourns; for the corn has perished,* for *dried up has the wine, for destroyed has been the oil.* And by these words he intimates that they seeing saw nothing; as though he said, "Let necessity extort mourning from you; ye are indeed starving, all complain of want, all deplore the need of bread and wine; and yet no one of you thinks whence this want is, that it is from the hand of God. Ye feel it in your mouth, ye feel it in your palate, ye feel it in your throat, ye feel it in your stomach; but ye feel it not in your heart." In short, the Prophet intimates that the Jews were void of right understanding; they indeed deplored their famine, but they were like brute beasts, who,

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when hungry, show signs of impatience. So the Jews mourned, because their stomach disquieted them; but they knew not that the cause of their want and famine was their sins. It afterwards follows—

11. Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished.	11. Erubescite agricolæ, ululate vinitores super triticum et hordeo; quia periit messis agri.

The Prophet says nothing new here, but only strengthens what he had said before, and is not wordy without reason; for he intends here not merely to teach, but also to produce an effect: And this is the design of heavenly teaching; for God not only wishes that what he says may be understood, but intends also to penetrate into our hearts: and the word of God, we know, consists not of doctrine only, but also of exhortations, and threatenings, and reproofs. This plan then the Prophet now pursues: *Ye husbandmen*, he says, *be ashamed, and ye vinedressers, howl; for perished has the harvest of the field.* The sum of the whole is, that the Jews, as we have already said, could by no excuse cover their indifference; for their clamour was everywhere heard, their complaints everywhere resounded, that the land had become a waste, that they were themselves famished, that they were afflicted with many calamities; and yet no one acknowledged that God, who visited them for their sins, was the author. But what remains I shall put off until to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou invitest us daily by various means to repentance, and continuest also to urge us, because thou seest our extreme tardiness,—O grant, that we may at length be awakened from our indifference, and suffer us not to be inebriated by the charms of Satan and the world; but by thy Spirit rouse us to real groaning, that, being ashamed of ourselves, we may flee to thy mercy, and doubt not but that thou wilt be propitious to us, provided with a sincere heart we call on thee, and seek that reconciliation which thou daily offerest to us by thy Gospel in the name of thy only begotten Son. Amen.

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Lecture Fortieth.

12. The vine is dried up, and the fig-tree languisheth; the pomegranate-tree, the palm-tree also, and the apple-tree, *even* all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.

12. Vitis exaruit, et ficulnea infirmata est (*vel*, periit;) malogranatum, etiam palma et malus, omnes arbores exaruerunt: certè exaruit gaudium à filiis hominum.

The Prophet now concludes his subject, which was, that as God executed judgments so severe on the people, it was a wonder that they remained stupified, when thus reduced to extremities. *The vine*, he says, *hath dried up*, and every kind of fruit; he adds *the fig-tree*, afterwards the רמון, *remun*, *the pomegranate*, (for so they render it,) *the palm*, *the apple-tree*,[1] *and all trees*. And this sterility was a clear sign of God's wrath; and it would have been so regarded, had not men either wholly deceived themselves, or had become hardened against all punishments. Now this ἀναλσθησία (insensibility) is as it were the very summit of evils; that is, when men feel not their own calamities, or at least understand not that they are inflicted by the hand of God. Let us now proceed—

13. Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests; howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God; for the meat offering and the drink-offering is withholden from the house of your God.

14. Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders, *and* all the inhabitants of the land, *into* the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord,

15. Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord *is* at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty it will come.

13. Accingimini et plangete sacerdotes; ululate, ministri altaris; venite, pernoctate cum saccis, ministri Dei mei: quia prohibita est à domo Dei vestri oblatio et libamen.

14. Sanctificate jejunium, vocate cœtum, congregate senes, omnes incoles terræ, in domum Jehovæ Dei vestri, et clamate ad Jehovam,

15. Heus Diem! quia propinquus est dies Jehovæ, et tanquam vastitas ab Omnipotente veniet.

[1] Of the three foregoing trees we may add this account:—

The pomegranate, רמון, grows about 20 feet high, has a straight stem and spreading branches, and bears large red blossoms. Its fruit is about the size of an orange, and is delicious and cooling.

The palm or date-tree, תמר, is sometimes as high as 100 feet, and remarkably straight. Its fruit grows in clusters under its leaves, and is in taste very sweet. Palm branches were emblems of victory.

What is called here the apple-tree, תפוח, was no doubt the citron-tree. The word is derived from נפח, to breathe, on account of the extreme fragrance it emits.—*Ed.*

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Now the Prophet begins to exhort the people to repentance. Having represented them as grievously afflicted by the hand of God, he now adds that a remedy was at hand, provided they solicited the favour of God; and at the same time he denounces a more grievous punishment in future; for it would not have been enough that they had been reminded of their calamities and evils, except they also feared in time to come. Hence the Prophet, that he might the more move them, says, that the hand of God was still stretched out, and that there was something worse nigh at hand, except they of themselves anticipated it. This is the purport of the whole. I now come to the words.

Be girded, lament and howl, he says, *ye priests, the ministers of the altar.* The verb חגרו, *chegeru,* may be explained in two ways. Some understand it thus, "Gird yourselves with sackcloth;" for shortly after he says, *with sackcloth,* or *in sackcloth.* But we may take it as simply meaning, *gird yourselves,* that is, Hasten; for this metaphorical expression often occurs. As to the drift of the passage there is but little difference, whether we read, "Gird yourselves with sackcloth," or, "Hasten." And he addresses the priests, though a common and general exhortation to the whole people afterwards follows. But as God made them the leaders of his people, it behoved them to afford others an example. It is the common duty of all the godly to pray for and to further the salvation of their brethren; but it is a duty especially enjoined on the ministers of the word and on pastors. So also, when God calls those to repentance who preside over others, they ought to lead the way, and for two reasons;—first, because they have not been in vain chosen by the Lord for this end, that they might outshine others, and be as luminaries;—secondly, because they who bear any public office ought to feel a double guilt, when the Lord visits public sins with judgment. Private men indeed sin; but in pastors there is the blame of negligence, and still more, when they deviate even the least from the right way, a greater offence is given. Rightly then does the Prophet begin with the priests, when he bids the whole people to repent. And he not only bids them to put on sackcloth, but commands them also, as we

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shall see, to proclaim a fast, and then to call an assembly: *ye priests*, he says, *be girded, and put on sackcloth, wail, howl, and pass the night in sackcloth;* and then he calls them *the ministers of the altar* and the *ministers of God*, but in a different sense; for the Prophet does not substitute the altar for God, as he would thus have formed an idol; but they are called the ministers of the altar, because they offered there sacrifices to God. They are indeed with strict propriety the ministers of God; but as the priests, when they sacrificed, stood in the presence of God, and as the altar was to them as it were the way of access to him, they are called the ministers of the altar. He calls them, at the same time, the ministers of God, and, as it has been stated, they are properly so called.

But he says here אֱלֹהַי, *alei*, (my God.) The *iod*, my, is by some omitted, as if it were a servile letter, but redundant. I, however, doubt not but that the Prophet here mentions Him as his God; for he thus intended to claim more authority for his doctrine. His concern or his contest was with the whole people; and they, no doubt, in their usual way, proudly opposed against him the name of God as their shield. "What! are we not the very people of God?" Hence the Prophet, in order to prove this presumption false, sets forth God as being on his side. He therefore says, 'The ministers of *my* God.' Had any one objected and said, that he was in common the God of the whole people, the Prophet had a ready answer,—"I am specially sent by Him, and sustain his person, and plead the cause which he has committed to me: He is then my God and not yours." We now then see the Prophet's meaning in this expression. He now adds, *for cut off is offering and libation from the house of our God.* He confesses Him at the same time to be their God with reference to the priesthood; for nothing, we know, was presumptuously invented by the Jews, as the temple was built by God's command, and sacrifices were offered according to the rule of the law. He then ascribes to the priesthood this honour, that God ruled in the temple; for God, as we have already said, approved of that worship as having proceeded from his word: and to this purpose is that

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saying of Christ, 'We know what we worship.' But yet the priests did not rightly worship God; for though their external rites were according to the command of God, yet as their hearts were polluted, it is certain that whatever they did was repudiated by God, until, being touched with the fear of his judgment, they fled to his mercy, as the Prophet now exhorts them to do.

He afterwards adds, *sanctify a fast, call an assembly, gather the old, all the inhabitants of the land.* קדשׁ, *kodash*, means to sanctify and to prepare; but I have retained its proper meaning, *sanctify a fast;* for the command had regard to the end, that is, sanctification. Then *a fast proclaim*—for what purpose? That the people might purge themselves from all their pollutions, and present themselves pure and clean before God. *Call an assembly.* It appears that there was a solemn convocation whenever a fast was proclaimed among the people: for it was not enough for each one privately at home to abstain from food, except all confessed openly, with one mouth and one consent, that they were guilty before God. Hence with a fast was connected a solemn profession of repentance. The uses and ends of a fast, we know, are various: but when the Prophet here speaks of a solemn fast, he doubtless bids the people to come to it suppliantly, as the guilty are wont to do, who would deprecate punishment before a judge, that they may obtain mercy from him. In the second chapter there will be much to say on fasting: I only wish now briefly to touch on the subject.

He afterwards bids *the old to be gathered*, and then adds, *All the inhabitants of the land.* But he begins with the old, and justly so, for the guilt of the old is always the heaviest. But this word relates not to age as in a former instance. When he said yesterday, 'Hear ye, the aged,' he addressed those who by long experience had learnt in the world many things unknown to the young or to men of middle age. But now the Prophet means by the old those to whom was intrusted the public government; and as through their slothfulness they had suffered the worship of God and all integrity to fall into decay, rightly does the Prophet wish them to be leaders and precursors to the people in their confession of repentance;

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and further, it behoved them, on account of their office, as we have said of the priests, to lead the way. Joel at the same time shows that the whole people were implicated in guilt, so that none could be excepted, for he bids them all to come with the elders.

Call them, he says, *to the house of Jehovah your God, and cry ye to Jehovah.* We hence learn why he had spoken of fasting and of sackcloth, even that they might humbly deprecate God's wrath; for fasting of itself would have been useless, and to put on sackcloth, we know, is in itself but an empty sign: but prayer is what the Prophet sets here in the highest rank, and fasting is only an appendage, and so is sackcloth. Whosoever then puts on sackcloth and withholds prayer, is guilty of mockery; and no one can derive any good from mere fasting; but when fasting and sackcloth are added to prayer, and are as it were handmaids, then they are not uselessly practised. We may then observe, that the end of fasting and sackcloth was no other, than that the priests, together with the whole people, might present themselves suppliantly before God, and confess themselves worthy of destruction, and that they had no hope except from his gratuitous mercy. This is the meaning.

It now follows, *Alas the day! for nigh is the day of Jehovah.* Here the Prophet, as it was at first stated, threatens something worse in future than what they had experienced. He has hitherto been showing their torpidity; now he declares that they had not yet suffered all their punishments, but that there was something worse to be feared, except they turned seasonably to God. And he now exclaims, as though the day of Jehovah was before his eyes, and he calls it the day of Jehovah, because in that day God would stretch forth his hand to execute judgment; for while he tolerates men or bears with their sins, he seems not to rule in the world. And though this mode of speaking is common enough in Scripture, it ought yet to be carefully noticed; for all seem not to understand that God calls that his own day, when he will openly shine forth and appear as the judge of the world: but as long as he spares us, his face seems to be hidden from us; yea, he seems not to govern the world. The Prophet

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therefore declares here that the day of the Lord was at hand; for it cannot be, but that the Lord must at length rise up and ascend his throne to punish men, though for a time he may connive at them. But the interjection, expressive of grief, intimates that the judgment, of which the Prophet speaks, was not to be despised, for it would be dreadful; and he wished to strike terror into the Jews, for they were too secure. And he says, *The day is nigh*, that they might not procrastinate, as they were wont to do, from day to day: for though men be touched by God's judgment, they yet even desire time to be prolonged to them, and they come very tardily to God. Hence the Prophet, that he might correct this their great slothfulness, says that the day was nigh.

He adds, כשד משדי יבוא, *kashed meshadi ibua*, 'as a desolation from the Almighty will it come.' The word שדי, *shadi*, signifies a conqueror; but it proceeds from the verb שדד, *shadad;* and this in Hebrew means "to desolate," or "to destroy." The powerful and the conqueror is called שדי, *shadi;* and hence they call God שדי, *shadi*, on account of his power. Some derive it from udder: then they call God שדי, *shadi*, as though Scripture gave him this name, because from him flows all abundance of good things as from a fountain. But I rather refer this name to his strength and power; for the Jews, we know, gloried in the name of God as one armed to defend their safety. Whenever then the Prophets said that God was שדי, *shadi*, the people laid hold on this as a ground for false confidence, "God is almighty, we are then secure from all evils." But yet this confidence was not founded on the promises: and it was, we know, an absurd and profane presumption to have thus abused the name of God. Since then the Jews foolishly prided themselves on this, that God had adopted them for his people, the Prophet says here, "There will come a desolation from the Almighty;" that is, "God is Almighty, but ye are greatly deceived in thinking that your safety is secured by his power; for he will, on the contrary, be opposed to you, inasmuch as ye have provoked his wrath." It follows—

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16. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, *yea*, joy and gladness from the house of our God?

17. The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered.

16. An non coram oculis nostris cibus excisus est? è domo Dei nostri gaudium et exultatio?

17. Putrefacta sunt grana subtus sulcos suos, desolata sunt reconditoria (*vel*, apothecæ desolatæ sunt,) diruta sunt horrea, quia exaruit frumentum.

He repeats the same thing as before, for he reproaches the Jews for being so slow to consider that the hand of God was against them. *Has not the meat*, he says, *been cut off before our eyes? joy and exultation from the house of our God?* Here he chides the madness of the Jews, that they perceived not things set before their eyes. He therefore says that they were blind in the midst of light, and that their sight was such, that seeing they saw nothing: they surely ought to have felt distressed, when want reached the temple. For since God had commanded the first-fruits to be offered to him, the temple ought not by any means to have been without its sacrifices; and though mortals perish a hundred times through famine and want, yet God ought not to be defrauded of his right. When, therefore, there was now no offering nor libation, how great was the stupidity of the people not to feel this curse, which ought to have wounded them more than if they had been consumed a hundred times by famine? We see then the design of the Prophet's words, that is, to condemn the Jews for their stupidity; for they considered not that a most grievous judgment was brought on them, when the temple was deprived of its usual sacrifices.

He afterwards adds, that *joy and gladness* were taken away: for God commanded the Jews to come to the temple to give thanks and to acknowledge themselves blessed, because he had chosen his habitation among them. Hence this expression is so often repeated by Moses, 'Thou shalt rejoice before thy God;' for by saying this God intended to encourage the people the more to come cheerfully to the temple; as though he said, "I certainly want not your presence, but I wish by my presence to make you glad." But now when the worship of God ceased, the Prophet says, that joy had been also abolished; for the Jews could not cheerfully give thanks to God when his curse was before their eyes,

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when they saw that he was their adversary, and also when they were deprived of the ordinances of religion. We now then perceive why the Prophet joins joy and gladness with oblations: they were the symbols of thanksgiving.

He shows the cause of the evil, *Rotted have the grains in the very furrows.* For they call seeds פרדות, *peredut*, from the act of scattering. He then calls grains by this name, because they are scattered; and he says that they rotted in the fields when they ought to have germinated. He then adds, *The granaries have become desolate, and the barns have been pulled down;* for there was no use for them. Hence we conclude, that sterility had become most grievous and perpetual; for if the people had been only afflicted by famine for a few harvests or for one year, the Prophet would not have spoken thus. The famine must then have been, as it has been already stated, for a long time. Let us now proceed—

18. How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate.

18. Quomodo ingemuit bestia? confusa sunt armenta boum? quia desunt illis pascua: etiam greges ovium desolati sunt.

The Prophet amplifies his reproof, that even oxen as well as other animals felt the judgment of God. There is then here an implied comparison between the feeling of brute animals and the insensibility of the people; as though he said, "There is certainly more intelligence and reason in oxen and other brute animals than in you; for the herds groan, the flocks groan, but ye remain stupid and confounded. What does this mean?" We then see that the Prophet here compares the stupidity of the people with the feeling of animals, to make them more ashamed.

How, he says, *has the beast groaned?* The question serves to show vehemence; for if he had said, in the form of a narrative, that the animals groaned, that the cattle were confounded, and that the flocks perished, the Jews would have been less affected; but when he exclaims, and, moved with astonishment, speaks interrogatively, How does the beast groan? he, no doubt, wished to produce an effect on the Jews, that they might perceive the judgment of God, which they

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had before passed by with their eyes closed, though it was quite manifest. It follows—

19. O Lord, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field.

19. Ad te Jehovam clamabo, quia ignis consumpsit pascua (*vel*, habitacula) deserti: et flamma accendit omnes arbores agri.

20. And the beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up; and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

20. Etiam bestiæ agri clamabunt ad te (*quanquam* ערץ *proprium est cervi, ut dicunt grammatici, sicuti etiam Psalmo* 42 *habetur: est illic idem verbum:* clamabunt *igitur* bestiæ ad te,) quia aruerunt decursus aquarum, quia ignis consumpsit habitacula (*vel*, pascua) deserti.

When the Prophet saw that he succeeded less than he expected, leaving the people, he speaks of what he would do himself, *I will cry to thee, Jehovah.* He had before bidden others to cry, and why does he not now press the same thing? Because he saw that the Jews were so deaf and listless as to make no account of all his exhortations: he therefore says, "*I will cry to thee, Jehovah;* for they are touched neither by shame nor by fear. Since they throw aside every regard for their own safety, since they account as nothing my exhortations, I will leave them, and *will cry to thee;*" which means this,—"I see, Lord, that all these calamities proceed from thy hand; I will not howl as profane men do, but I will ascribe them to thee; for I perceive thee to be acting as a judge in all the evils which we suffer." Having then before declared that the Jews were more tardy than brute animals, and having reproached them for feeling less acutely than oxen and sheep, the Prophet now says, that though they all remained obstinate, he would yet do what a pious man and a worshipper of God ought to do, *I will cry to thee*—Why? Because *the fire hath consumed the pastures*, or the dwellings, *of the wilderness.*

He here again gives an awful record of God's judgments. Though the heat may burn up whole regions, yet we know that pasture-lands do not soon wither, especially on mountains; and of such cold pastures he speaks here. We know that however great may be the fertility of mountains, yet coolness prevails there, and that, in the greatest drought, the

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mountainous regions are ever green. But the Prophet tells us here of an unusual thing, that the dwellings of the wilderness were burnt up. Some render נאות, *naut*, pastures; others, dwellings: but as to the meaning, we may read either; for the Prophet refers here to cold and humid regions, which never want moisture in the greatest heats. Some render the word, the beautiful or fair spots of the wilderness, but improperly. He doubtless means pastures, or dwellings, or folds. *The fire* then *hath consumed the dwellings*, or *pastures of the wilderness*. This was not usual; it did not happen according to the ordinary course of nature: it then follows that it was a miracle. This is the reason why the Prophet says, that it was now time to cry to God; for it did not appear to be fortuitous, that the heat had burnt up regions which were moist and well watered. *The flame*, he says, *hath burnt up all the trees of the field*.

He afterwards adds, *The beasts of the field will also cry*, (for the verb is in the plural number;) the beasts then will cry. The Prophet expresses here more clearly what he had said before, that though the brute animals were void of reason, they yet felt God's judgment, so that they constrained men by their example to feel ashamed, for they cried to God: *The beasts* then *of the field cry*. He ascribes crying to them, as it is elsewhere ascribed to the young ravens. The young ravens, properly speaking, do not indeed call on God; and yet the Psalmist says so, and that, because they confess, by raising up their bills, that there is no supply for their want except God supports them. So also the Prophet mentions here the beasts as crying to God. It is indeed a figure of speech, called personification; for this could not be properly said of beasts. But when the beasts made a noise under the pressure of famine, was it not such a calling on God as their nature admitted? As much then as the nature of brute animals allows, they may be said to seek their food from the Lord, when they send forth lamentable cries and noises, and show that they are oppressed with famine and want. When, therefore, the Prophet attributes crying to beasts, he at the same time reproaches the Jews with their stupidity, that they did not call on God. "What do you mean?" he says. "See

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the brute animals; they show to you what ought to be done; it is at least a teaching that ought to have effect on you. If I and the other Prophets have lost all our labour, if God has in vain performed the office of a teacher among you, let the very oxen at least be your teachers; to whom indeed it is a shame to be disciples, but it is a greater shame not to attend to what they teach you; for the oxen by their example lead you to God."

We now perceive how much vehemence there is in the Prophet's words, when he says, Even the beasts of the field will cry to God; for *the streams of waters have dried up, and the fire hath consumed the dwellings*, or *the pastures of the wilderness*. He again teaches what I have lately stated, that sterility proceeded from the evident judgment of God, and that it ought to have struck dread into men, for it was a sort of miracle. When, therefore, the courses of waters dried up on the mountains, how could it be deemed natural? אֲפִיקִים, *aphikim*, mean courses of waters, or valleys, through which the waters run. The Prophet here refers, no doubt, to those regions which, through the abundance of water, always retain their fertility. When, therefore, the very valleys were burnt up, they ought surely to own that something wonderful had happened. On this account, he ascribes crying to herds and brute animals, and not any sort of crying, but that by which they called on God. What remains we shall defer till to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou seest us to be surrounded with the infirmity of our flesh, and so held by, and, as it were, overwhelmed with, earthly cares, that we can hardly raise up our hearts and minds to thee,—O grant, that being awaked by thy word and daily warnings, we may at length feel our evils, and that we may not only learn by the stripes thou inflictest on us, but also of our own accord, summon ourselves to judgment, and examine our hearts, and thus come to thy presence, being our own judges; so that we may anticipate thy displeasure, and thus obtain that mercy which thou hast promised to all, who, turning only to thee, deprecate thy wrath, and also hope for thy favour, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Lecture Forty-first.

CHAPTER II.

1. Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for *it is* nigh at hand;

1. Clangite tuba in Sion, et clamate (*alii vertunt*, tantarizate: *sed est generale verbum;* clamate *igitur*, *vel*, clamorem edite) in monte sancto meo: contremiscant omnes incolæ terræ, quia venit dies Jehovæ, quia propinquus est.

2. A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, *even* to the years of many generations.

2. Dies tenebrarum et caliginis, dies nubis et obscuritatis, sicut aurora expanditur super montes, populus magnus et robustus (*vel*, terribilis;) similis ei non fuit à seculo, et post eum, non addet (*hoc est*, non erit amplius) ad annos generationis et generationis (*ego cogor uno contextu legere hæc omnia; dicam postea suo loco rationem.*)

3. A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land *is* as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them.

3. Coram facie ejus (coram ipso) devorans ignis, et post eum exuret flamma: sicut hortus Eden terra coram ipso (ante faciem ejus *ad verbum;*) et post eum desertum solitudinis (*vel*, vastitatis:) adèoque evasio non erit ei.

4. The appearance of them *is* as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run.

4. Quasi aspectus equorum aspectus ejus, et tanquam equites current.

5. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array.

5. Sicut vocem quadrigarum (*sic* מרכבות *interpretes vertunt: postea dicam de hoc verbo,*) super cacumina montium saltabunt, secundum vocem flammæ ignis vorantis stipulam, quasi populus robustus (*vel*, terribilis) paratus ad prœlium.

6. Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness.

6. A facie ejus pavebunt populi, omnes facies colligent nigredinem.

7. They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks.

7. Quasi gigantes (*vel*, fortes) discurrent, sicut viri prœlii ascendent murum, et vir (*hoc est*, quisque) in viis suis ambulabit, et non tardabunt gressus suos (*alii*, non inquirent de viis suis.)

8. Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and *when* they fall up-

8. Vir fratrem suum (*hoc est*, quisque socium suum) non premet, quisque in viis suis ambulabit:

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on the sword, they shall not be wounded.

9. They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief.

10. The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:

11. And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army; for his camp *is* very great: for *he is* strong that executeth his word: for the day of the Lord *is* great, and very terrible; and who can abide it?

usque in gladium cadent (*hoc est*, super gladium cadent) non vulnerabuntur (*alii*, non concupiscent.)

9. Per urbem gradientur, per murum discurrent, in domos ascendent, usque ad fenestras intrabunt tanquam fur.

10. Coram eo contremiscet terra, et augentur cœli; sol et luna nigrescent, et stellæ retrahent splendorem suum.

11. Et Jehova edet vocem suam coram exercitu suo, quia magna valdè castra ejus: quia robustus qui facit (*vel*, exequitur) verbum ejus; quia magnus dies Jehovæ, et terribilis valde, et quis sustinebit eum?

THIS chapter contains serious exhortations, mixed with threatenings; but the Prophet threatens for the purpose of correcting the indifference of the people, whom we have seen to have been very tardy to consider God's judgments. Now the reason why I wished to join together these eleven verses was, because the design of the Prophet in them is no other than to stir up by fear the minds of the people. The object of the narrative then is, to make the people sensible, that it was now no time for taking rest; for the Lord, having long tolerated their wickedness, was now resolved to pour upon them in full torrent his whole fury. This is the sum of the whole. Let us now come to the words.

Sound the trumpet, he says, *in Zion; cry out in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the earth tremble.* The Prophet begins with an exhortation. We know, indeed, that he alludes to the usual custom sanctioned by the law; for as on festivals trumpets were sounded to call the people, so also it was done when anything extraordinary happened. Hence the Prophet addresses not each individually; but as all had done wickedly, from the least to the greatest, he bids the whole assembly to be called, that they might in common own themselves to be guilty before God, and deprecate his vengeance. It is the same as though the Prophet had said, that there was no one among the people who could exempt himself from blame, for iniquity had prevailed through the whole

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body. But this passage shows, that when any judgment of God is impending, and tokens of it appear, this remedy ought to be used, namely, that all must publicly assemble and confess themselves worthy of punishment, and at the same time flee to the mercy of God. This, we know, was, as I have already said, formerly enjoined on the people; and this practice has not been abolished by the gospel. And it hence appears how much we have departed from the right and lawful order of things; for at this day it would be new and unusual to proclaim a fast. How so? Because the greater part are become hardened; and as they know not commonly what repentance is, so they understand not what the profession of repentance means; for they understand not what sin is, what the wrath of God is, what grace is. It is then no wonder that they are so secure, and that when praying for pardon is mentioned, it is a thing wholly unknown at this day. But though people in general are thus stupid, it is yet our duty to learn from the Prophets what has always been the actual mode of proceeding among the people of God, and to labour as much as we can, that this may be known, so that when there shall come an occasion for a public repentance, even the most ignorant may understand that this practice has ever prevailed in the Church of God, and that it did not prevail through inconsiderate zeal of men, but through the will of God himself.

But he bids *the inhabitants of the land to tremble.* By these words he intimates, that we are not to trifle with God by vain ceremonies, but to deal with him in earnest. When, therefore, the trumpets sound, our hearts ought to tremble; and thus the reality is to be connected with the outward signs. And this ought to be carefully noticed; for the world is ever disposed to have an eye to some outward service, and thinks that a satisfaction is given to God, when some external rite is observed. But we do nothing but mock God, when we present him with ceremonies, while there is no corresponding sincere feeling in the heart; and this is what we shall find handled in another place.

The Prophet now adds threatenings, that he might stir up the minds of the people: *For coming,* he says, *is the day of*

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Jehovah, for nigh it is. By these words he first intimates, that we are not to wait until God strikes us, but that as soon as he shows signs of his wrath, we ought to anticipate his judgment. When God then warns us of his displeasure, we ought instantly to solicit pardon: *nigh*, he says, *is the day of Jehovah.* What follows has a regard to the end which we have mentioned; for the Prophet paints the terrible judgment of God with the view of rousing minds wholly stupid and indifferent.

And then he says, *A day of darkness and of thick darkness, a day of clouds and of obscurity, as the dawn which expands over the mountains.* By calling it a dark and gloomy day, he wished to show that there would be no hope of deliverance; for, according to the common usage of Scripture, we know that by light is designated a cheerful and happy state, or the hope of deliverance from any affliction: but the Prophet now extinguishes, as it were, every hope in this world, when he declares that the day of Jehovah would be dark, that is, without hope of restoration. This is his meaning. When he says afterwards, *As the dawn which expands*, &c., he mentions this to signify the celerity with which it would come; for we know how sudden is the rising of the dawn on the mountains: the dawn spreads in a moment on the mountains, where darkness was before. For the light penetrates not immediately either into valleys or even into plains; but if any one looks at the summits of mountains, he will see that the dawn rises quickly. It is then the same as though the Prophet said, "The day of the Lord is nigh, for the Lord can suddenly stretch forth his hand, as the dawn spreads over the mountains."

He then mentions its character, *A people great and strong, to whom there has not been the like from the beginning, or from ages, and after whom there will be no more the like, to the years of a generation and a generation.* Here the Prophet specifies the kind of judgment that would be, of which he had generally spoken before; and he shows that what he had hitherto recorded of God's vengeance ought not to be so understood as that God would descend openly and visibly from heaven, but that the Assyrians would be the ministers and execu-

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tioners of his vengeance. In short, the Prophet shows here, that the coming of that people ought to have been as much dreaded as if God had put forth his hand and executed on his people the vengeance deserved by their sins. And by these words he teaches us, that men gain nothing by being blind to the judgments of God; for God will notwithstanding execute his work, and use the instrumentality of men; for men are the scourges by which he chastises his own people. The Chaldeans and the Assyrians were unbelievers; yet God used them for the purpose of correcting the Jews. This the Prophet now shows, that is, that God was the avenger in these very Assyrians, for he employed them as the ministers and executioners of his judgment. We see at the same time that the Prophet describes here the terrible wrath of God to shake off from the Jews their tardiness; for he saw that they were not moved by all his threatenings, and ever laid hold on some new flattering pretences. This is the reason why he gives such a long description.

Before them, he says, *the fire will devour*, and after them *the flame will burn*. He means that the vengeance of God would be such as would consume the whole people: for God had in various ways begun to chastise the people, but, as we have seen, without any advantage. The Prophet then says here that the last stroke remained, and that the Lord would wholly destroy men so refractory, and whom he could not hitherto restore to a sound mind by moderate punishments. For he had in a measure spared them, though he had treated them sharply and severely, and given them time to repent. Hence, when the Prophet saw that they were wholly irreclaimable, he says, that it now only remained that the Lord should at once utterly consume them.

He adds, *As the garden of Eden the land is before them, and after them it is the land of solitude; and so* (and also) *there will be no escape from them*. Here the Prophet warns the Jews, that though they inhabited a most pleasant country, and one especially fruitful, there was no reason for them to flatter themselves, for God could convert the fairest lands into a waste. He therefore compares Judea to the garden of Eden or to Paradise. But such also was the state of Sodom,

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as Moses shows. What did it avail the Sodomites that they dwelt as in Paradise, that they inhabited a rich and fertile land, and thought themselves to be nourished as in the bosom of God? So also now the Prophet says, "Though the land is like Paradise, yet when the enemy shall march through it, a universal waste shall follow, a scattering shall everywhere follow, there shall be no cultivation, no pleasantness, no appearance of inhabited land, for the enemy will destroy every thing." His purpose was to prevent the Jews, by confiding in God's blessing which they had hitherto experienced, from heedlessly disregarding in future his vengeance; for his wrath would in a moment consume and devour whatever fruitfulness the land had hitherto possessed. This is the meaning. He therefore concludes that there would be no escape from these enemies, the Assyrians, because they would come armed with a command to reduce to nothing the whole land.

He afterwards adds many similitudes, which any one of himself can sufficiently understand: I shall not therefore be long in explaining them, and many words would be superfluous. *As the appearance of horses their appearance, and as horsemen, so will they run.* This verse sets forth again the suddenness of vengeance, as though the Prophet had said, that long distance would be no obstacle, for the Assyrians would quickly move and occupy Judea; for distance deceived the Jews, and they thought that there would be a long respite to them. Hence the Prophet here removes this vain confidence, when he says, that they would be like horses and horsemen. He then adds, *Like the sound of chariots.* They expound מרכבות, *merecabut*, chariots, though the Hebrews rather think them to be harnesses, or saddles as we call them; but yet I prefer to view them as chariots; for what the Prophet says, that they *shall leap on the tops of mountains* like the sound of chariots, would not be suitably applied to the trappings of horses. *They then shall leap on tops of mountains*—but how? as chariots, that is, they shall come with great force, or make a great and terrible noise. And he speaks of the tops of mountains, for there we know the noise is greater when there is any commotion. The Prophet,

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therefore, does in every way amplify God's vengeance, that he might awaken the Jews, who by their indifference had too long provoked the Lord's wrath.

Like the sound, he says, *of the flame of fire*, or of a fiery flame, *devouring the stubble*. He compares the Assyrians to a flame, which consumes all things; and he compares the Jews to stubble, though they thought themselves fortified by many forces and strongholds.

At length he adds, *As a strong people, prepared for battle; their face the people will dread, and all faces shall gather blackness*. By these words the Prophet intimates that the Assyrians at their coming would be supplied with such power as would, by report only, lay prostrate all people. But if the Assyrians should be so formidable to all people, what could the Jews do? In short, the Prophet here shows that the Jews would by no means be able to resist enemies so powerful; for they would by their fame alone so lay prostrate all people, that none would dare to rise up against them. He then compares them to giants. *As giants*, he says, *they will run here and there; as men of war they will climb the wall, and man* (that is, every one) *in his ways shall walk*. The Prophet heaps together these various expressions, that the Jews might know that they had to do with the irresistible hand of God, and that they would in vain implore assistance here and there; for they could find no relief in the whole world, when God executed his vengeance in so formidable a manner. He says further, *they shall not stop their goings*, though some render the words, "They shall not inquire respecting their ways;" for he had said before, "They shall proceed in their ways:" then the meaning is,—They shall not come like strangers, who, when they journey through unknown regions, make anxious inquiries, whether any be lying in wait, whether there be any turnings in the road, whether the ways be difficult and perplexed: *They shall not inquire*, he says; they shall securely proceed, as though the road was open to them, as though the whole country was known to them. This part also serves to show celerity, that the Jews might dread the vengeance of God the same as if it was quite nigh them.

He then adds, *A man shall not push his brother*. By this

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mode of speaking the Prophet means that they would come in perfect order, so that the multitude would create no confusion, as it is mostly the case: for it is very difficult for an army to march in regular order without tumult, like two or three men walking together. For when a hundred horsemen march together, some commonly hinder others. When therefore so large a number assemble together, it can hardly be possible for them not to retard and impede one another. But the Prophet declares that this would not be the case with the Assyrians, for the Lord would direct their goings. Though then the Lord would bring so large a multitude, it would yet be so well arranged and in such order, that no one would push his companion, or be any hinderance to him. *A man*, he says, shall in his way proceed, even without any impediment.

And on swords they shall fall, and shall not be wounded: that is, they shall not only be strong men of war, so that they shall intrepidly face every kind of danger; but they shall also escape unhurt from all weapons; though they may rush on swords like madmen and show no care for themselves, they shall not yet be wounded. But this may be taken in a still simpler way, "They shall not be wounded," that is, as if they could not be wounded. And it seems to me to be the genuine sense of the Prophet, that they would not entertain any fear of death, so as cautiously to attack their enemies, but would with impunity provoke death itself by casting themselves on the very swords: they would not then fear any wound, but dare to face swords as if they were wholly harmless to them. Some render the word, "they shall not covet;" and then the word means, as if the Prophet had said, that they would not be covetous of money. But this meaning can hardly suit this place; and we see that the best sense seems to be, that they would heedlessly rush on swords, as though they could not be wounded.

It afterwards follows, *Through the city shall they march; over the wall shall they run here and there; into houses shall they climb; through the windows shall they enter like a thief.* The Prophet here shows that the Jews in vain trusted in their fortified cities, for the enemies would easily penetrate into

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them. They shall march, he says, through the city, that is, as though there were no gates to it. The meaning then is, that though Judea abounded in cities, which seemed impregnable and appeared sufficient to arrest the course of enemies, as it had happened almost always, so that great armies were forced to desist when any strong fortified city stood in their way; yet the Prophet says that cities would be no impediment to the Assyrians at their coming to Judea, for they would march through the city, as along a plain road, where no gates are closed against them. They shall then march through the midst of cities as through a plain or open fields. To the same purpose is what follows, They shall run here and there over the wall, he says. These are indeed hyperbolical words; yet, when we consider how slow men are to fear punishment, we must allow that the Prophet in these expressions does not exceed moderation. They shall then run up and down through the city; that is, "In vain you expect that there will be to you any rest or quietness, for ye think that you will be able for a time to sustain the onsets of your enemies: This," he says, "will by no means be the case, for they shall run here and there over the wall, as though it were a plain. Besides, *They shall climb into the houses, and enter in through the windows*, and do this *as a thief;* that is, though there should be no hostile attack, yet they shall stealthily and secretly penetrate into your houses: when there will be a great tumult, when the whole regions shall meet in arms, and when ye will think yourselves able to resist, they will then as thieves quietly enter into your houses and come in through the windows, and ye shall not be able to close up the passage against them."

Then he adds, *Before their face shall the earth tremble, and in anguish shall be the heavens; the sun and the moon shall become dark, and the stars shall withdraw their brightness.* The Prophet speaks here more hyperbolically; but we must ever remember that he addressed men extremely stupid: it then behoved him to speak in an unusual manner, that he might touch their feelings; for it avails nothing to speak in an ordinary way to perverse men, especially to those who have divested themselves of all shame, and whom Satan hath fas-

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cinated, so that they fear nothing and grieve at nothing. When therefore such stupidity lays hold on the minds of men, God must thunder that his word may be heard. As then the listlessness of the people was monstrous, so it was necessary, so to speak, for the Prophet to utter monstrous words. This is the reason why he now says, *Before their face* (namely, that of the enemies) *shall the land tremble;* and then he adds, *The heavens also shall be in anguish;* not that the heavens would fear the Assyrians; but the Prophet intimates that such would be the vengeance, that it would terrify the whole world; and this he intimates, that the Jews might cease to expect any subterfuges, for they flattered themselves, as though they could fly on the clouds, or could find for themselves some hiding-places or some corners at a distance. The Prophet gives them to understand that the whole world would be full of horror, when the Lord would come furnished with his army. He speaks also of *the sun and the moon;* as though he said, "There will be no more any hope of aid from created things; for the vital light itself shall fail, when the Lord shall pour forth the flood of his fury: *The sun and the moon,* he says, *shall become dark; and the stars shall withhold their brightness.* Though then ye lift up your eyes, not even a spark of light will there be to comfort you, for darkness on every side will cover you; and ye shall know by heaven as well as by earth that God is angry with you." Here, in short, he shuts up against the Jews every avenue to hope; for not only the Assyrian will rage on earth, but God will also give signs of vengeance from heaven, so that the sun will be constrained to show such a sign, as well as the moon and all the stars.

He at last adds, *And Jehovah will utter his voice before his army.* The Prophet seems in this verse to anticipate whatever objection men might adduce. "O! thou denouncest on us great terrors, and as if the Assyrians were not to be counted as men, as if no other people were in the world, as if there was no other army, as if there were no other forces, as if none else had courage; but if the Assyrians are at this day formidable, they have yet neighbours who can gather a force sufficient easily to oppose them." And Egypt was then

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a populous country, and well fortified; and who would not have said that the Egyptians were equal to the Assyrians? and the Jews also thought themselves safe through a treaty with them. And then there was Syria; and there were many kingdoms, with which the Jews might have boasted that they were surrounded, so that no access to them was open to the Assyrians; for however insufficient were the people of Moab or the people of Ammon, yet they were all joined together, even Edom, and Ammon, and Moab: and then Tyrus and Sidon, and the many neighbouring kingdoms, might certainly have been sufficient to resist the Assyrians. Now, that no one might object all this, the Prophet shortly anticipates it by saying, that God would be the leader of his army; as though he had said, "I have already declared this to be the hand of God: for the Assyrians will not come here of their own accord; that is, without being stirred up by God: but as this truth has not as yet sufficiently moved your feelings, know that God will be the leader of this army: *God will send forth his voice before his army.*" Here he distinctly calls the Assyrians the attendants of God; they shall not then come as soldiers hired by their own king, they shall not come as carrying on war for an earthly king, but the Lord himself shall guide them, and by his voice encourage them. By this expression the Prophet shows that the Jews would not have a contest with one nation only, but also with God himself and with all his celestial power.

He therefore says, *God will utter his voice before his army; for very great will be his camp.* He again repeats, that the multitude which was to execute the biddings of God would be so great, that the Jews would seek forces in vain to resist it. *Strong*, he says, *is he who executes his word.* He expresses more clearly what I have stated already, that though cupidity impelled the Assyrians, that though they were intent on rapine and plunder, yet they would not come merely through an impulse of their own, but that the Lord would prepare them and use them as his instruments: *Powerful*, then, *is he who doeth the word* of God; that is, who executes his command; not that the Assyrians designed to show regard to God or to offer to him their service, as the faithful do, who

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willingly devote themselves to Him; but that the Lord by his secret providence guided them and employed them to punish his own people.

He afterwards adds, in the last place, *For great* will be *the day of Jehovah and terrible, and who will endure it?* In this clause he shows that the vengeance would be such as would reduce the Jews to nothing, and that it was now time to repent, and that if they still turned a deaf ear to what the Prophet denounces, God would punish their perverseness.

Now with regard to what he says, that *strong* is he who doeth the word of God, we have elsewhere reminded you that men serve God in two ways,—they either execute his commands willingly, or are led to do so by a blind impulse. The angels and the faithful perform God's commands, because they are guided by the spirit of obedience; but the wicked also, and the devil who is their head, fulfil God's biddings; this, however, is not to be imputed to them as obedience, for they are only led by their own wicked purposes, and seek to destroy, as far as they can, the whole government of God; but they are constrained, willing or unwilling, to obey God, not of their own accord or willingly, as I have said, but the Lord turns all their efforts to answer the end which he has decreed. Whatever, then, Satan and the wicked attempt to do, they at the same time serve God and obey his commands; and though they rage against God, he yet holds them in by his bridle, and also so guides their attempts and their purposes as to answer his own ends. In this sense, then, it is, that Joel says, that the Assyrians would do the word of God; not that it was their purpose to obey God, not that God had commanded them anything, but he puts the word of the Lord here for his secret purpose. As, then, the wicked perform no voluntary obedience to God, but constrained, when they execute God's commands; so there is a twofold command or word of God: there is the command by which he teaches his own children and leads them to obey him; and there is another, a hidden command, when he deigns not to address men, and shows not what pleases him or what he means to do, but suffers them to be led by their own sinful

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desires; in the meantime, he has his own secret purpose, which by them he executes, though without their intention.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou invitest us daily with so much kindness and love, and makest known to us thy paternal good-will, which thou didst once show to us in Christ thy Son,—O grant, that, being allured by thy goodness, we may surrender ourselves wholly to thee, and become so teachable and submissive, that wherever thou guidest us by thy Spirit thou mayest follow us with every blessing: let us not, in the meantime, be deaf to thy warnings; and whenever we deviate from the right way, grant that we may immediately awake when thou warnest us, and return to the right path, and deign thou also to embrace us and reconcile us to thyself through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Forty-second.

12. Therefore also now, saith the Lord, Turn ye *even* to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

13. And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

12. Atque etiam nunc dicet Jehova, convertimini ad me in toto corde vestro, et in jejunio, et in fletu, et in planctu.

13. Et scindite cor vestrum, et non vestimenta vestra, et convertimini ad Jehovam Deum vestrum, quia ipse propitius et misericors, longus ad iram, et multus clementia, et pœnitebit eum super malo.

The Prophet, having proclaimed the dreadful judgment which we have noticed, now shows that he did not intend to terrify the people without reason, but, on the contrary, to encourage them to repentance; which he could not do without offering to them the hope of pardon; for as we have said before, and as it may be collected from the whole of Scripture, men cannot be restored to the right way, except they entertain a hope of God's mercy, inasmuch as he who has been ungodly, when he despairs, wholly disregards himself, observing no restraint. Hence the Prophet now represents God as propitious and merciful, that he might thus kindly allure the people to repentance.

He says first, *And even now the Lord says, Turn ye to me.*

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The Prophet exhorts the people, not in his own name, but speaks in the person of God himself. He might indeed have borne witness to the favour which he proclaimed; but the discourse becomes more striking by introducing God as the speaker. And there is a great importance in the words, *even now;* for when one considers what we have noticed in the beginning of the chapter, a prospect of relief could hardly have been deemed possible. God had, indeed, in various ways, tried to restore the people to the right way; but, as we have seen, the greater part had become so void of feeling, that the scourges of God were wholly ineffectual; there remained, then, nothing but the utter destruction which the Prophet threatened them with at the beginning of the second chapter. Yet, in this state of despair, he still sets forth some hope of mercy, provided they turned to him; *even now*, he says. The particles גַּם, *ugam*, are full of emphasis, "even now," that is, "Though ye have too long abused God's forbearance, and with regard to you, the opportunity is past, for ye have closed the door against yourselves; yet even now,—which no one could have expected, and indeed what ought to be thought incredible by yourselves,—even now God waits for you, and invites you to entertain hope of salvation." But it was necessary that these two particles, *even now*, should be added; for it is not in the power of men to fix for themselves, as they please, the season for mercy. God here shows the acceptable time, as Isaiah says (Isa. xlix. 8) to be, when he has not yet rejected men, but when he offers to be propitious. We must then remember that the Prophet gives not here liberty to men to delay the time, as the profane and scorners are wont to do, who trifle with God from day to day; but the Prophet here shows that we must obey the voice of God, when he invites us, as also Isaiah says, 'Behold now the time accepted, behold the day of salvation: seek God now, for he is near; call on him while he may be found.' So then, as I have reminded you, these two particles, *even now*, are added, that men may be made attentive to the voice of God when he invites them, that they may not delay till to-morrow, for the Lord may then close the door, and repentance may be too late. We at the same time see how indulgently

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God bears with men, since he left a hope of pardon to a people so obstinate and almost past recovery.

Even now, he says, *turn ye to me with your whole heart.* The Prophet here reminds us that we must not act feignedly with God; for men are ever disposed to trifle with him. We indeed see what almost the whole world is wont to do. God graciously meets us and is ready to receive us unto favour, though we have a hundred times alienated ourselves from him; but we bring nothing but hypocrisy and disguise: hence the Prophet declares here distinctly, that this dissimulation does not please God, and that they can hide nothing, who only pretend some sort of repentance by external signs, and that what is required is the serious and sincere feeling of the heart. This is what he means by the whole heart; not that perfect repentance can be formed in men, but the whole or complete heart is opposed to a divided heart: for men well understand that God is not ignorant; yet they divide their heart, and when they bestow some portion on God, they think that he is satisfied; and in the meantime there remains an interior and some hidden perverseness, which separates them far from God. This vice the Prophet now condemns, when he says, *Turn with the whole heart.* He then shows that it is an hypocrisy abominable to God, when men keep the greater part of their heart, as it were, closed up, and think it enough, if only they bring, so to speak, some volatile feeling.

He afterwards adds, *fasting, and weeping, and mourning;* and by these words he shows how grievously they had sinned; as though he said, that they deserved not only one kind of destruction, but were worthy of hundred deaths; that God therefore would not now be content with any common repentance, and except they came suppliantly and deeply felt their own guilt. It is indeed true, that we ought daily and even constantly to sigh, because we continue almost every hour to provoke God's wrath against us; but the Prophet here speaks of solemn fasting, because the people had so grievously offended God that there was required some extraordinary confession, such as he here describes. *Come* then to me *with fasting, and weeping, and wailing:* that is, "Show

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at length that you are guilty, and submissively deprecate the vengeance which ye have through your wickedness deserved." He speaks like a judge, when he tells the criminal, not to act dissemblingly, but simply to confess his fault. The guilty are indeed wont to weave many excuses to avoid punishment; but when the judge deems a man guilty, and he is abundantly proved to be so, he says, "What good can you do? for these your shufflings and subterfuges make your case worse: for now I hold you bound, and you cannot escape by these shifts, and will only the more provoke my displeasure. If then you wish me to show you favour, own how grievously you have offended, and without any colouring; confess now that you are worthy of death, and that nothing else remains for you, except I mercifully pardon you: for if you try to extenuate your crime, if you attempt by some excuse to seek reprief, you will gain nothing." So now does the Lord deal with this people: *Turn to me*, he says; first, sincerely; then *with fasting, with weeping, and with wailing;* that is, "Let it appear that you suppliantly deprecate the destruction which ye have deserved, for moderate repentance will not do, inasmuch as ye are guilty before me of so many crimes." We now apprehend the Prophet's meaning.

He then subjoins, *Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn to Jehovah your God.* The Prophet again repeats that we ought to deal sincerely with God; for all those ceremonies, by which men imagine that they discharge their duties, are mere mockeries, when they are not preceded by a pure and sincere heart. But as they were wont under mournful circumstances to rend their garments, he therefore says, "God has become now insensible to these customs; for with regard to men, ye are ceremonious enough, and more than enough: ye indeed rend your garments, and thus draw pity from men, and yet your heart remains whole, there is no rending, no opening; *Rend* then *your heart;*" that is, "Leave off thus to mock God, as ye have been wont to do, and begin with your heart." It is indeed certain that the orientals were given to many ceremonies; but the vice the Prophet here condemns in the Jews is natural as it were to all men; so that every one of us is inclined to hypocrisy, and has need

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of having his attention drawn to the sincerity of the heart. We must then remember that this truth is to be set forth at all times and to all nations. Let any one search himself and he will find that he labours under this evil,—that he would rather rend his garment than his heart. And since the Jews usually observed this custom, the Prophet does not without reason deride it, and say, that it was of no account with God except they rent their hearts. But when he bids them to rend their hearts and not their garments, though he seems to repudiate that external practice, he does not yet distinctly condemn it, but intimates that it was a lawful thing, provided the heart was rent. Now this expression, *Rend the heart*, ought not to be deemed harsh, for it is to be referred to the external practice: when they rent the garments, they made themselves naked before God and put off all ornaments; but he wished them to be displeased with themselves, and rather to make bare the heart itself. The heart of hypocrites, we know, is wrapped up, and they ever have recourse to hiding-places, that they may avoid the presence of God. Then the similitude is most suitable, when the Prophet bids them to rend the heart. Besides, the passage is clear enough, and needs not many remarks; it means, that God regards the real feeling of the heart, as it is said in Jer. v.; he is not content with ocular obedience, such as men exhibit, but he would have us to deal with him in sincerity and truth.

Hence he repeats again, *Turn to Jehovah your God.* Here the Prophet shows, from what God is, that men foolishly and grossly deceive themselves when they would please God with their ceremonies: "What!" he says, "have you to do with a child?" For the import of the words is this,—"When an offence against man is to be removed, ye anxiously come to him: now when ye perceive that God is angry with you, ye think that he will be propitious to you, if ye only trifle with him; can God bear such a reproach?" We hence see what the Prophet means when he says, *Turn to Jehovah your God;* that is, "Remember that you have not to do with a block of wood or with a stone, but with your God, who searches hearts, and whom mortals can by no crafts deceive." The same is said by Jeremiah, 'Israel, if thou turnest, turn

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to me,' (Jer. iv. 1;) that is, "Pretend not to turn by circuitous courses and windings, but come in a direct way, and with a real feeling of heart, for I am he who calls thee." So also now the Prophet says, *Turn to Jehovah your God.*

Then follows the promise of pardon, *For he is propitious and merciful.* We have already said that repentance is preached in vain, except men entertain a hope of salvation; for they can never be brought to fear God truly, unless they trust in him as their Father, as it is stated in Ps. cxxx. 4, 'With thee is propitiation, that thou mayest be feared.' Hence, whenever the Prophets were anxious to effect anything by their doctrine, while exhorting the people to repentance, they joined to the invitation "Come," the second part, "Ye shall not come in vain." This "Come," comprehends all exhortations to repentance; "Ye shall not come in vain," includes this testimony respecting God's grace, that He will never reject miserable sinners, provided they return to him with the heart. The Prophet then is now engaged on this second head; God, he says, is *propitious and merciful.* And this connection is to be observed by us; for as Satan fills us with insensibility when God invites us, so also he draws us away into despair when God denounces judgment, when he shows that it is not time for sleep. "What good will you gain?" Thus Satan by his craft disheartens us, that we may labour in vain, when we seek to be reconciled to God. Hence, whenever Scripture exhorts us to repentance, let us learn to join this second part, "God invites us not in vain." If then we return to him, he will be instantly inclined to grant forgiveness; for he wills not that miserable men should labour in vain or be tormented. This is the benefit of which the Prophet speaks when he says that God is propitious and merciful.

He afterwards adds, that *he is slow to wrath, and abundant in goodness.* These testimonies respecting God occur often in other places; and all the Prophets, as well as David, have borrowed these declarations from Exod. xxxiv.; where the nature of God is described; and He is said there to be propitious and merciful, slow to wrath, and abundant in goodness. Though there is no need of dwelling longer on these words,

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as we perceive the Prophet's design; yet more extended remarks will not be superfluous, since the Prophet so much at large recommends the mercy of God. Though men too much indulge themselves in security, yet when God calls them to himself, they are not able to receive his favour; though he may testify twice or thrice that he will be propitious to them, yet he cannot persuade them but with great difficulty. This is the reason why the Prophet, after having said that God is propitious and merciful, adds, that he is *slow to wrath, and abundant in goodness;* it was, that the Jews might overcome their distrust, and that however much despair might keep them back, they might not yet hesitate to come to God, seeing that he declares himself to be so merciful.

He at last adds, *He will repent of the evil.* The Prophet here not only describes the nature of God, but goes further and says, that God, who is by nature placable, will not remain fixed in his purpose, when he sees people returning to him in sincerity; but that he suffers himself to be turned to show favour, so as to remit the punishment which he had previously denounced. And it is a mode of speaking which often occurs in Scripture, that God repents of evil; not that he really changes his purpose, but this is said according to the apprehensions of men: for God is in himself immutable, and is said to turn from his purpose, when he remits to man the punishment he has previously threatened. Whatever proceeds from God's mouth ought to be regarded as an inviolable decree; and yet God often threatens us conditionally, and though the condition be not expressed it is nevertheless to be understood: but when he is pacified to us and relaxes the punishment, which was in a manner already decreed according to the external word, he is then said to repent. And we know, that as we do not apprehend God such as he is, he is therefore described to us in such a way as we can comprehend, according to the measure of our infirmity. Hence God often puts on the character of men, as though he were like them; and as this mode of speaking is common, and we have spoken of it elsewhere, I now pass it by more briefly. It follows—

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14. Who knoweth *if* he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; *even* a meat-offering and a drink-offering unto the Lord your God?

14. Quis novit an revertatur et pœniteat eum, et relinquat post se (*alii vertunt*, post eum; *ego tamen malo sic transferre*, Relinquat post se) benedictionem, oblationem et libamen Jehovæ Deo vestro?

The Prophet seems at first sight to leave men here perplexed and doubtful; and yet in the last verse, as we have seen, he had offered a hope of favour, provided they sincerely repented. Hence the Prophet seems not to pursue the same subject, but rather to vary it: and we have already said, that all exhortations would be frigid, nay, useless, by which God stirs us up to repentance, except he were to testify that he is ready to be reconciled. Seeing then that the Prophet here leaves the minds of men in suspense, he seems to rescind what he has before alleged respecting God's mercy. But we must understand that this is a mode of speaking which often occurs in Scripture. For wherever God is set forth to us as one hardly willing to pardon, it is done to rouse our slothfulness, and also to shake off our negligence. We are at first torpid when God invites us, except he applies his many goads; and then we act formally in coming to him: it is hence needful that both these vices should be corrected in us,—our torpor must be roused,—and those self-complacences, in which we too much indulge ourselves, must be shaken off. And this is the object of the Prophet; for he addresses, as we have seen, men almost past recovery. If he had only said, God is ready to pardon, if he had used this way of speaking, they would have come negligently, and would not have been sufficiently touched by the fear of God: hence the Prophet here, as it were, debates the matter with them, "Even though we ought justly to despair of pardon, (for we are unworthy of being received by God,) yet there is no reason why we should despair; *for who knows?*" which means, "God is placable, and we must not despair."

The Prophet then sets forth here the difficulty of obtaining pardon, not to leave men in suspense, for this would be contrary to his former doctrine; but to create in them a desire for the grace of God, that they might by degrees gather courage, and yet not immediately rise to confidence,

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but that they might come anxiously to God, and with much deliberation, duly considering their offences. We now understand the purpose of the Prophet.

But this will be easier understood by supposing two gradations in repentance. Then the first step is, when men feel how grievously they have offended. Here sorrow is not to be immediately removed after the manner of impostors, who cajole the consciences of men, so that they indulge themselves, and deceive themselves, with empty self-flatteries. For the physician does not immediately ease pain, but considers what is more necessary: it may be he will increase it, for a thorough clearing may be needful. So also do the Prophets of God, when they observe trembling consciences, they do not immediately apply soothing consolations, but on the contrary show that they ought not, as we have already said, to trifle with God, and exhort them while willingly running to God, to set before them his terrible judgment, that they may be more and more humbled. The second step is, when the Prophets cheer the minds of men, and show that God now willingly meets them, and desires nothing more than to see men willing to be reconciled to him.

The Prophet is now urging them to take the first step, when he says, *Who knows whether the Lord will turn?* But some may object and say, "Then the Prophet has spoken inconsistently; for first he has described God as merciful, and has spoken of his goodness without any reserve; and then he throws in a doubt: he seems here to observe no consistency." I answer, that the Prophets of God do not always very anxiously hold to what seems consistent in their discourses; and farther, that the Prophet has not spoken here in vain or inconsiderately; for he, in the first place, generally sets forth God as merciful, and afterwards addresses particularly a people who were almost past recovery, and says, "Though ye think that it is all over with you as to your salvation, and ye deserve to be rejected by God, yet ye ought not to continue in this state; rather entertain a hope of pardon." This is what the Prophet had in view; he throws in no doubt, so as to make the sinner uncertain, whether or not he could obtain pardon; but as I have said,

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he wished only to rouse torpidity, and also to shake off vain self-flatteries.

He then adds, *And leave after him a blessing.* We here see more clearly what I have already said, that the Prophet, considering the state of those whom he addressed, states a difficulty; for the Jews were not to escape temporary punishment, and the Prophet did not intend to dismiss them in a secure state, as though God would inflict on them no punishment; nay, he wished to bend their necks, that they might receive the strokes of God, and calmly submit to his correction. But all hope might have been lost, when the Jews saw, that though the Prophet had declared that God would be propitious, they were yet not spared, but suffered severe punishment for their sins,—"What does this mean? Has God then disappointed us? We hoped that he would be propitious, and yet he ceases not to be angry with us." Hence the Prophet now subjoins, *Who knows whether he will leave behind him a blessing?*

What is this—*behind him?* What does it mean? Even this, that as God was to be a severe judge to punish the people's wickedness, the Prophet now says, "Though God beats you with his rods, he can yet relieve you by administering comfort. Ye indeed think that you are beaten almost to death; but the Lord will temperate his wrath, so that a blessing will follow these most grievous punishments." We now, then, understand the purpose of the Prophet: for he does not simply promise pardon to the Jews, but mitigates the dread of punishment, that is, that though God would chastise them, he would yet give place to mercy. Then God will *leave behind him a blessing;* that is, "These strokes shall not be incurable." And this admonition is very necessary, whenever God deals severely with us; for when we feel his wrath, we then think that there is no grace remaining. It is then not without reason that the Prophet says, that God *leaves behind him a blessing;* which means, that when he shall pass by us with his rod, he will yet restrain his severity, so that some blessing will remain.

He afterwards adds, מנחה ונסך ליהוה אלהיכם, *meneche unesac laIeve Aleicam, an offering and a libation,* he says, *to*

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Jehovah your God. This has been designedly added, that the Jews might entertain more hope. For with regard to them, they had deserved to be wholly exterminated a hundred times; yea, they deserved to pine away utterly through famine: but the Prophet intimates here, that God would have a regard for his own glory and his worship. "Though," he says, "we have deserved to perish by famine, yet God will be moved by another consideration, even this,—that there may be some offering, that there may be some libation in the temple: since then God has chosen us a people to himself, and has required the first-fruits to be offered to him, and has consecrated for himself all our provision and all our produce in the first-fruits, and also in the daily offerings, though he has now resolved to consume us with famine and want, yet that his worship may continue, he will make the land fruitful to us, corn and wine will yet be produced for us." But the Prophet does not mean that there would only be so much corn as would be enough for offerings, or only so much wine as would be sufficient for libations; but he means, as I have already said, that though God would not provide for the safety of the people, he would yet have a regard for his own glory. God required the corn and the wine to be offered to him, not that he needed them, but because he consecrated to himself our provision. As then he would have the food and provisions, on which we live, to be sacred to him, he will not allow them wholly to fail. "God will yet surely pity us, and he will pity us, because he has deigned to choose us a people to himself, and so to join us with himself, that he wishes to eat, as it were, with us." For God seemed then to partake, as it were, of the same table with his people; for the Law required bread or the ears of corn, and also wine, to be offered to God: not that he, as I have said, needed such supports; but that he might show that he had all things in common with his people. This communion then, or fellow-participation of God with his chosen people, gave them more hope; and this is what the Prophet had in view.

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PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou seest us so foolish in nourishing our vices, and also so ensnared by the gratifications of the flesh, that without being constrained we hardly return to thee,—O grant, that we may feel the weight of thy wrath, and be so touched with the dread of it, as to return gladly to thee, laying aside every dissimulation, and devote ourselves so entirely to thy service, that it may appear that we have from the heart repented, and that we have not trifled with thee by an empty pretence, but have offered to thee our hearts as a sacrifice, so that we and all our works might be sacred offerings to thee through our whole life, that thy name may be glorified in us through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Forty-third.

15. Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly;

16. Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.

17. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thine people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?

15. Clangite tuba in Sion, sanctificate jejunium, indicite conventum:

16. Colligite populum, sanctificate cœtum, coadunate senes, colligite parvulos et sugentes ubera, et egrediatur sponsus è penetrali suo et sponsa è thalamo suo.

17. Inter atrium et altare plorent sacerdotes, ministri Jehovæ, et dicant, Propitius esto Jehova super populum tuum; et ne des hæreditatem tuam in opprobrium, ut dominentur super eos gentes: cur dicent in populis, Ubi est Deus eorum?

Here again the Prophet reminds them that there was need of deep repentance; for not only individuals had transgressed, but the whole people had become guilty before God; and we also know how many and grievous their sins had been. There is no wonder then that the Prophet requires a public profession of repentance.

He bids them first to *sound the trumpet in Zion.* This custom, as we have seen at the beginning of the chapter, was in common use under the Law; they summoned their meetings by the sound of trumpets. There is then no doubt but that the Prophet here refers to an extraordinary meeting.

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They sounded the trumpets whenever they called the people to the festivals. But it must have been unusual for the Jews to proclaim a fast on account of God's heavy judgment, which was to come on them unless it was prevented. He then shows the purpose of this, bidding them to *sanctify a fast.* By this word קדש, *kodesh*, he means a proclamation for a holy purpose. *Sanctify*, then, *a fast*, that is, Proclaim a fast in the name of God.

We slightly touched on the subject of fasting in the first chapter, but deferred a fuller discussion to this place. Fasting, we know, is not of itself a meritorious work, as the Papists imagine it to be: there is, indeed, strictly speaking, no work meritorious. But the Papists dream that fasting, in addition to its merit and worth, is also by itself of much avail in the worship of God; and yet fasting, when regarded in itself, is an indifferent work.[1] It is not then approved by God, except for its end; it must be connected with something else, otherwise it is a vain thing. Men, by private fastings, prepare themselves for the exercise of prayer, or they mortify their own flesh, or seek a remedy for some hidden vices. Now I do not call fasting temperance; for the children of God, we know, ought through their whole life to be sober and temperate in their habits; but fasting, I regard that to be, when something is abstracted from our moderate allowance: and such a fast, when practised privately, is, as I have said, either a preparation for the exercise of prayer, or a means to mortify the flesh, or a remedy for some vices.

But as to a public fast, it is a solemn confession of guilt, when men suppliantly approach the throne of God, acknowledge themselves worthy of death, and yet ask pardon for their sins. Fasting then, with regard to God, is similar to black and mean garments and a long beard before earthly judges. The criminal goes not before the judge in a splendid dress, with all his fine things, but casts away every thing that was before elegant in his appearance, and by his uncombed hair and long beard he tries to excite the compassion

[1] Medium opus, "a middle work, neutral, neither good nor bad."—*Ed.*

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of his judge. There is, at the same time, another reason for fasting; for when we have to do with men, we wish to please their eyes and conciliate their favour; and he who fasts, not only testifies openly that he is guilty, but he also reminds himself of his guilt; for as we are not sufficiently touched by the sense of God's wrath, those aids are useful which help to excite and affect us. He then who fasts, excites himself the more to penitence.

We now perceive the right use of fasting. But it is of public fasting that the Prophet speaks here. For what purpose? That the Jews, whom he had before summoned, might present themselves before God's tribunal, and that they might come there, not with vain excuses, but with humble prayer. This is the design of fasting. We now see how foolishly the Papists have abused fasting; for they think it to be a meritorious work; they imagine that God is honoured by abstinence from meat; they also mention those benefits of fasting to which I have referred; but they join fasts with festivals, as if there was some religion in abstaining from flesh or certain meats. We now then perceive by what gross puerilities the Papists trifle with God. We must then carefully notice the end in view, whenever the Scripture speaks of fasting; for all things will be confounded, except we lay hold on the principle which I have stated—that fasting ought ever to be connected with its end. We shall now proceed.

Proclaim, he says, *a meeting*. עצרה, *otsare*, is not properly an assembly, but the deed itself:[1] hence also the word is transferred to festivals. *Proclaim*, then, *a meeting, call the people, sanctify the assembly*. The word, sanctify, seems to be taken here in a sense different from what it had been before. The people, in order to engage in holy services, performed those rites, as it is well known, by which they cleansed themselves from their pollutions. No one entered the temple without washing; and no one offered a sacrifice without abstaining from an intercourse with his wife. The Prophet then

[1] That is, restraint. Literally it is, *Proclaim a restraint*. And as it means a restraint generally from labour as well as from food, it is applied to designate a feast-day, when men are detained or restrained from labour.—*Ed.*

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alludes to these legal purgations when he says, *Sanctify the assembly.*

He afterwards adds, *Bring together the old, gather the young sucking the breasts.* With regard to the old, we have said before that they are separately named, because they ought to have taken the lead by their example; and further, a greater guilt belonged to them, for we know that it is a duty incumbent on the old to govern others, and, as it were, to hold the reins. But when the old themselves become dissolute, and restrain not the lusts of the young, they are doubly culpable before God. It is no wonder then that the Prophet bids here the old to be called; for it became them to be the leaders of others in confessing their repentance. But what follows seems strange. He would have the young, sucking the breasts, to be assembled. Why are these brought in as involved in guilt? besides, the people were to own their repentance; and yet infants are without understanding and knowledge; so that they could not humble themselves before God. It must, then, have been a mockery and a vain show; nay, the Prophet seems to encourage the people in hypocrisy by bidding young infants to assemble together with men and women. To this I answer, that children ought to have been brought together, that those grown up and advanced in years might through them perceive what they deserved; for the wrath of God, we know, reached to the very infants, yea, and to brute animals: when God puts forth his hand to punish any people, neither asses nor oxen are exempt from the common scourge. Since, then, God's wrath comes upon brute animals and upon young infants, it is no wonder that the Lord bids all to come forth publicly and to make a confession of repentance; and we see the same to have been the case with brute animals; and when, if the Lord grants, we shall come to the Prophet Jonah, we shall then speak on this subject. The Ninevites, when they proclaimed a fast, not only abstained themselves from meat and drink, but constrained also their oxen and horses to do the same. Why? Because the very elements were involved, as it were, with them in the same guilt: "Lord, we have polluted the earth; whatever we possess we have also polluted by our sins; the oxen, the

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horses, and the asses, are in themselves innocent, but they have contracted contagion from our vices: that we may therefore obtain mercy, we not only offer ourselves suppliantly before thy face, but we bring also our oxen and horses; for if thou exercisest the fullest severity against us, thou wilt destroy whatever is in our possession." So also now, when the Prophet bids infants to be brought before God, it is done on account of their parents. Infants were in themselves innocent with regard to the crimes of which he speaks; but yet the Lord could have justly destroyed the infants together with those of advanced age. It is then no wonder that in order to pacify God's wrath the very infants are summoned with the rest: but as I have already said, the reason is on account of their parents, that the parents themselves might perceive what they deserved before God, and that they might the more abhor their sins by observing that God would take vengeance on their children, except he was pacified. For they ought to have reasoned from the less to the greater: "See, if God exercises his own right towards us, there is destruction not only hanging over us, but also over our children; if they are guilty through our crimes, what can we say of ourselves, who are the authors of these evils? The whole blame belongs to us; then severe and dreadful will be God's vengeance on us, except we be reconciled to him."

We now then perceive why infants were called, together with their parents; not that they might confess their penitence, as that was not compatible with their age, but that their parents might be more moved, and that such a sight might touch their feelings, and that dread might also seize them on seeing that their children were doomed to die with them for no other reason, but that by their contagion and wickedness they had infected the whole land and everything that the Lord had bestowed on them.

He afterwards subjoins, *Let the bridegroom go from his closet*, or recess, *and the bride from her chamber*. It is the same as though the Prophet had bidden every joy to cease among the people; for it was of itself no evil to celebrate nuptials; but it behoved the people to abstain from every rejoicing on seeing the wrath of God now suspended over them. Hence,

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things in themselves lawful ought for a time to be laid aside when God appears angry with us; for it is no season for nuptials or for joyful feasts, when God's wrath is kindled, when the darkness of death spreads all around. No wonder, then, that the Prophet bids the bridegroom and the bride to come forth from their chamber, that is, to cast aside every joy, and to defer their nuptials to a more suitable time, and now to undergo their delights, for the Lord appeared armed against all. It would have been then to provoke, as it were, his wrath, to indulge heedlessly in pleasures, when he wished not only to terrify, but almost to frighten to death those who had sinned; for when the Lord threatens vengeance, what else is indifference but a mockery of his power? "I have called you to weeping and wailing; but ye have said, 'We will feast:' as I live, saith the Lord, this iniquity shall never be blotted out." We see how extremely displeased the Lord appears there to be with those who, having been called to weeping and fasting, did yet indulge themselves in their pleasures; for such, as I have said, altogether laugh to scorn the power of God. The Prophet's exhortation ought then to be noticed, when he bids the bridegroom and the bride to leave their nuptials, and to put on the same mournful appearance as the rest of the people. He thus shook off heedlessness from all, since God had appeared with tokens of his wrath. This is the sum of the whole.

Then it follows, *Between the court and the altar let the priests, the ministers of Jehovah, weep.* It was the priests' office, we know, to pray in the name of the whole people; and now the Prophet follows this order. It was not, indeed, peculiar to the priests to pray and to ask pardon of God; but they prayed in the name of all the people. The reason must be well known to us; for God intended by these legal types to remind the Jews, that they could not offer prayers to him, except through some mediator; the people were unworthy to offer prayers by themselves. Hence the priest was, as it were, the middle person. The whole of this is to be referred to Christ; for by him we now pray; he is the Mediator who intercedes for us. The people stood then afar off, we now dare to come nigh to God; for the vail is rent, and through

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Christ we are all made priests. Hence, we are allowed in a familiar way and in confidence to call God our Father: and yet without Christ's intercession, no access to God would be open to us. This then was the reason for the legal appointment. Hence the Prophet now says, *Let the priests weep;* not that he wished the people in the meantime to neglect their duty; but he expresses what had been prescribed by the law of God; that is, that the priests should offer supplications in the name of the people.

And he says, *Between the court and the altar;* for the people remained in the court, the priests themselves had a court by its side which they called the sacerdotal court; but the people's court was over against the sanctuary. Then the priest stood, as it were, in the middle between God, that is, the ark of the covenant, and the people: the people also were standing there. We now perceive that what the Prophet meant was, that the people had the priests as their mediators to offer prayers; and yet the confession of them all was public. He calls the priests *the ministers of Jehovah,* as we have before found. He thus designates their office; as though he had said, that they were not more worthy than the rest of the people, as though they excelled by their own virtue or merits; but that the Lord had conferred this honour on the tribe of Levi by choosing them to be his ministers. It was then on account of their office that they came nearer to God, and not for any merit in their own works.

He further adds, *Spare, Lord,* or be propitious to, *thy people; and give not thy heritage to reproach, that the Gentiles may rule over them.* Here the Prophet leaves nothing to the priests, but to flee to God's mercy; as though he had said, that now no plea remained for the people, and that they were greatly deceived if they pretended any excuse, and that their whole hope was in God's mercy. He afterwards shows the ground on which they were to seek and to hope for mercy; and he calls their attention to God's gratuitous covenant, *Give not thy heritage for a reproach to the Gentiles.* By these words he shows, that if the Jews depended on themselves, they were past recovery; for they had so often and in such various ways provoked God's wrath, that they could not hope

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for any pardon: they had also been so obstinate, that the door as it were had been closed against them on account of their hardness. But the Prophet here reminds them, that as they had been freely chosen by God as his peculiar people, there remained for them a hope of deliverance, but that it ought not to have been sought in any other way. We now then understand the design of the Prophet, when he speaks of God's heritage; as though he had said, that the people could now undertake nothing to pacify God, had they not been God's heritage: *Give not* then *thy heritage to reproach.* He had in view the threatening, which he had before mentioned; for it was an extreme kind of vengeance, when the Lord determined to visit his people with utter destruction; after having worn them out and consumed them by famine and want, God resolved wholly to consume them by the sword of enemies. It is then to this vengeance that he now alludes when he says, *That the Gentiles may not rule over them.* It is therefore absurd, as many do, to connect with this the discourse concerning the locusts: such a thing is wholly inconsistent with the design of the Prophet.[1]

It is then added, *Why should they say among the people, Where is their God?* The Prophet now adduces another reason, by which the Jews might propitiate God, and that is, because his own glory is concerned: this reason has indeed an affinity to the former, for God could not expose his heritage to the reproaches of the Gentiles without subjecting also his holy name to their blasphemies. But the Prophet shows here more distinctly that God's glory would be subject to reproach among the nations, if he dealt with the people according to the full demands of justice; for the Gentiles would contemptuously deride him, as though he could not save his

[1] Dr Henderson, in his learned work on the Minor Prophets, lately published, agrees with Calvin in rejecting the interpretation alluded to here, though adopted by many learned men. He considers that the Assyrians, and not locusts, are described in the beginning of this chapter, and that the Prophet "employs language borrowed from the appearance and movements of these insects, in order to make a deeper impression upon his hearers, whose minds were full of ideas derived from them as instruments of the calamity under which they were suffering." The locusts in the first chapter are spoken of as having already appeared; but the judgment detailed in this chapter is represented as future.—*Ed.*

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people. Hence in this second clause he reminds us, that when engaged in seeking pardon, we ought to place before our eyes the glory of God, that we ought not to seek our own salvation without remembering the holy name of God, which ought of right to be preferred to all other things. And at the same time he strengthens also the hope of the people, when he teaches that the glory of God is connected with the salvation of those who had sinned; as though he had said, "God, that he may provide for his own glory, will have mercy on you." They must then have come more willingly to God's presence, when they saw that their salvation was connected with the glory of God, and that they would be saved that the name of God might be preserved safe and free from blasphemies.

We now then perceive what the Prophet meant in this verse: he first strips the Jews of all confidence in works, showing that nothing remained for them except they fled to God's free mercy. He then shows that this mercy is founded on God's gratuitous covenant, because they were his heritage. In the third place, he shows that God would be merciful to them from a regard to his own glory, lest he should expose it to the reproaches of the Gentiles, if he exercised extreme severity towards his people. Let us now proceed—

18. Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people.

19. Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen.

18. Et æmulatus est (æmulabitur, *ad verbum*) Jehova (*hoc est*, zelo ducetur Jehova) super terram suam, et propitius erit (et miserabitur, *vel*, parcet; *nam* חמל *est* parcere) populo suo.

19. Et respondit Jehova (*vel*, respondebit) et dicit (*vel*, dicet) populo suo, Ecce ego mitto vobis triticum et mustum et oleum, et saturabimini eo (*vel*, illis *potius*, *est mutatio numeri*,) et non dabo vos amplius opprobrium inter Gentes.

The Prophet here again repeats, that prayers would not be in vain, provided the Jews truly humbled themselves before God. Then God, he says, will be jealous for his land and spare his people. He confirms what I have already said, that God would deal mercifully with his people, because they were his heritage, that is, because he had chosen them for

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himself. For the title of heritage, whence does it proceed except from the gratuitous covenant of God? for the Jews were not more excellent than others, but election was the only fountain from which the Jews had to draw any hope. We now then see why these words, *God will be jealous for his land*, are added; as though he said, "Though this land has been polluted by the wickedness of men, yet God has consecrated it to himself: He will, therefore, regard his own covenant, and thus turn away his face from looking on their sins." *He will spare*, he says, *his people*, that is, his chosen people: for, as I have said, the Prophet no doubt ascribes here the safety of the people, and the hope of their safety, to the gratuitous election of God; for the jealousy of God is nothing else but the vehemence and ardour of his paternal love. God could not, indeed, express how ardently he loves those whom he has chosen without borrowing, as it were, what belongs to men. For we know that passions appertain not to him; but he is set forth as a father, who burns with jealousy when he sees his son ill-treated; he acknowledges his own blood, his bowels are excited,—or, as a husband, who, on seeing dishonour done to his wife, is moved; and though he had been a hundred times offended, he yet forgets every offence; for he regards that sacred union between himself and his wife. Such a character, then, does God assume, that he might the better express how much and how intensely he loves his own elect. Hence he says, *God will be jealous for his land.* As he has hitherto been inflamed with just wrath, so now a contrary feeling will overcome the former; not that God is agitated by various passions, as I have already said, but this mode of speaking, transferred from men, is adopted on account of our ignorance.

He afterwards says, *God has answered*[1] *and said to his people, Behold, I will send to you corn, wine, and oil.* The Prophet does not here recite what had been done, but, on the

[1] There is no reason for rendering this in the past tense: it is in the same predicament with the verb, "will be jealous," in the former verse, and ought to be rendered like it in the future time, "will answer." The comment founded on this rendering, though true in itself, is yet too refined, and suits not this place.—*Ed.*

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contrary, declares, that God in future would be reconciled to them; as though he said, "I have hitherto been a herald of war, and bidden all to prepare themselves for the coming evil: but now I am a messenger to proclaim peace to you; if only you are resolved to turn to God, and to turn unfeignedly, I do now testify to you that God will be propitious to you; and as to your prayers, know that they are already heard; that is, know that as soon as they were conceived, they were heard by the Lord." Hence he says, He *has answered;* that is, "If, moved by my exhortation, ye return with sincerity to God, he will meet you, nay, he has already met you; he waits not until ye have done all that ye ought to do; but when he bids you to come to his temple and to weep, he at the same time wipes off your tears, he removes every cause of sorrow and anxiety." *God,* then, *has answered;* that is, "I am to you a certain and sufficient witness, that your prayers have been already accepted before God, though, as I have before reminded you, ye have not offered them."

And, at the same time, he speaks of the effect, *Behold, I will send to you corn, wine, and oil; and ye shall be satisfied.* Here, by the effects, he proves that God would be propitious; for want of food was the first evidence of God's displeasure, to be followed by the destruction which the Prophet had threatened. What does he say now? God will restore to you abundance of corn, wine, and oil; and he says further, *I will not give you to the Gentiles for a reproach, that they may rule over you.*

We now then apprehend the meaning of the Prophet; for he not only promises that God would be placable, but also declares that he was already placable; and this he confirms by external tokens; for God would immediately remove the signs of his wrath, and turn them into blessings. Hence he says, 'He will give you abundance of corn, wine, and oil, so as fully to satisfy you.' As they had perceived that God was angry with them by the sterility of the land, and also by its produce being consumed by chafers, by locusts, and other animals or insects; so now the Lord would testify his love to them by the abounding fruitfulness of every thing. And then he joins another sentence, *I will not give you any more*

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for a reproach to the Gentiles. When he says, "any more," he intimates that they had been before exposed to reproach; and we indeed know that they were then suffering many evils; but there remained that destruction of which we have heard. God does then here promise, that they should no more be subject to the reproaches of the Gentiles, provided they repented; for the Prophet ever speaks conditionally. It now follows—

20. But I will remove far off from you the northern *army*, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face towards the east sea, and his hinder part towards the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things.

20. Et Aquilonarem procul abigam à vobis, et disjiciam eum ad terram desertam et siccitatis: facies ejus ad mare orientale, et terminum ejus (disjiciam; *ego enim απο του κοιτου repeto*) ad mare novissimum: et ascend et fœtor ejus, et ascendet putredo ejus; quia magnificavit ad faciendum (*hoc est*, quia magnificè se extulit ad faciendum.)

In this verse he more fully confirms the Jews, that they might not be afraid of reproach from the Gentiles. It may have been that the Assyrians were now in readiness, prepared for war; it was then difficult to free the Jews from every fear. The Prophet had said generally that they would be no more subject to the mockeries of the Gentiles; but yet fear could not but be felt by them. "We see the Assyrians already armed; and what can we expect but to be devoured by them? for we are not able to resist them." Anxiety then must have constantly tormented the Jews, had he not distinctly and in express words declared, "It is in God's power to drive away the Assyrians, and to confound all their attempts." The Prophet, therefore, is now on this subject. The *Northlander*,[1] he says, *will I remove far from you.* The Chaldeans and the Assyrians, we know, were northward of

[1] Dr Henderson agrees with Calvin in rendering this word, *Northern* or *Northlander*, and quotes Coverdale as rendering it, *Him of the North.* He considers this word as of "prime importance in the interpretation of this prophecy." Locusts visited Palestine not from the north, but from the south. "That, however," he adds, "which determines the question, is the addition of the patronymic י to צפון, indicating that the North was not merely the quarter whence the subject of the discourse came, but that its *native country* lay to the North of Palestine; just as התימני, the *Temanite*, means *the Southern*, &c.—*Ed.*

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Judea. He then means here by the North those enemies, whose preparations terrified the Jews. Hence he says, *I will drive them from you, and drive them far into a land of desert and of drought.*[1] By these words he intimates, that though furnished with the greatest forces, and gaping for the land of Judea, and ready in their cupidity to devour it, the Assyrians would yet return home without effecting anything; *I will cast them into a desert land.* In vain, he says, they covet your abundance, and desire to satisfy themselves with the fertility of your land; for I will drive them and their dread away.

He then adds, *His face to the east sea, and his rear to the hindermost sea;* that is, I will scatter them here and there, so that his front shall be to one sea, (supposed to be the Salt Sea,) and his extremity to *the hindermost sea*, which was doubtless the Mediterranean: for the Salt Sea was east to the Jews, that is, it lies, as it is well known, towards the east. We now perceive in part what the Prophet means. But it must, at the same time, be added, that the Prophet removes fear from the Jews, which occupied their minds by observing the power of the Assyrians so great and extensive. "What is to be done? though God is present with us, and protects us by his help, yet how will he resist the Assyrians, for that army will fill the land?" "God will yet find means," says the Prophet; "though the Assyrians should occupy the whole land, from the Salt or the East Sea to the Meridian or Mediterranean Sea, yet will God drive away this vast multitude: there is no reason then that ye should fear." Hence the Prophet has designedly set forth how terrible the Assyrian forces would be, that he might show that they could not be resisted, unless the Lord should disperse them and disappoint all their efforts. At last he adds, *And his ill savour shall ascend:* but I am not able to finish to-day.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we continue to excite thy wrath against us, and are so insensible, though thou exhortest us daily

[1] Literally, "Into a land dry and desolate."—*Ed.*

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to repentance,—O grant, that what thy Prophet teaches may penetrate into our hearts, and be like a sounding trumpet, that we may be really and sincerely made humble before thee, and be so touched with the sense of thy wrath, that we may learn to put off all the depraved affections of our flesh, and not merely to deplore the sins we have already committed: and do thou also look upon us in future, that we may diligently walk in thy fear, and consecrate ourselves wholly to thee; and as thou hast deigned to choose us for thine inheritance, and gather us under thy Christ, may we thus live under him as our leader, until we be at length gathered into thy celestial kingdom to enjoy that happy rest, which thou hast promised to us, and which thou promisest also daily, and which has been purchased by the blood of the same, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lecture Forty-fourth.

YESTERDAY the Prophet spake of the northern enemy, and said that it was in God's power to drive him far away, that he might not hurt the people, that his vast army could not prevent the dispersion of his power and enterprises. Now he adds this, which we could not finish yesterday, *Ascend will his ill savour, and ascend will his rottenness; for highly hath he borne* or *exalted himself to do his purpose.* The Prophet expresses here more than in the former sentence, and that is, that God would turn to reproach the whole power of the Assyrian. The reason he subjoins deserves to be noticed, 'He hath highly exalted himself in his doings,' which means, that he was elated with great pride, thinking he could do anything; therefore he says, 'Ascend will his rottenness and ill savour.' This contains a very striking allusion; for when men deliberate about great things, it is the same as if they were to raise up themselves on high; and we also observe that hither tend their designs, who are engaged in difficult and arduous undertakings; for they are not content with their lot, but try to climb above the clouds. Since then the design of all mortals is to rise aloft, when they seek for themselves more than what is just, the Prophet, deriding this folly, says, "Ascend will the ill savour of the Assyrian, as a bad smell

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ascends from a putrid carcase. He thinks," he says, "that he can do what he pleases, as though heaven and earth were under his control: his power, enterprises, forces, and splendour, shall not ascend; but his ill savour only shall ascend as from a dead carcase." Why so? "He hath mightily exalted himself," he says, "to do his purpose."

We now understand the design of the Prophet: and hence this useful instruction may be gathered,—that God so checks the foolish confidence of those who pride themselves on their own strength, that he not only casts them down, but also turns their glory into shame, so that nothing ascends from them but ill savour and the smell of rottenness. Now follows what is of an opposite character:—

21. Fear not, O Land; be glad and rejoice; for the Lord will do great things.

21. Ne timeas terra, exulta et lætare; quia magnificè extulit se Jehova ad faciendum.

Here he shows that God would have his turn to exalt himself, which the Assyrian presumptuously attempted to do. For God seems for a time to lie still, when he withholds himself, when he puts not forth his power, but waits to see the tendency of the insane conspiracies and the Satanic madness of those who rise up against him and his Church. But having for a time thus restrained himself, he at length comes forth; and this is what the Prophet means when he says, *God hath highly exalted himself to do* his purpose. The Assyrian first attempted this; but now the Lord in his turn will raise up himself. God indeed could have done this before, but he would not; and we see this to be his usual mode of proceeding, to connive at the presumption of men, till the ripened time comes which he has predetermined; and then he dissipates in a moment their enterprises.

God, then, has now nobly exalted himself; therefore *rejoice and exult, O Land.* But he says first, *Fear not, O Land;* and then, *Exult and rejoice.* For it was necessary, in the first place, to remove the fear with which the minds of all were now seized. The Prophet, then, begins with consolation; for the Jews could have hardly entertained any joy, except the fear that oppressed them was first shaken off. Hence the

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Prophet maintains due order by saying, "Fear not, O Land, but rather exult and rejoice." He afterwards subjoins—

22. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig-tree and the vine do yield their strength.

22. Ne timeatis bestiæ agri, quia germinarunt pascua deserti, quia arbor protulit fructum suum, ficulnea et vitis protulerunt virtutem (*vel*, substantiam) suam.

Here the Prophet turns his address to the beasts; not that his instruction suited them; but it was a more efficacious mode of speaking, when he invited the very beasts to a participation of the people's joy; for except the Jews had been made to know that God's wrath was now nigh at hand, no consolation which the Prophet has hitherto applied would have been of any weight with them. But now since they perceived that God's wrath did not only suspend over them, but extended much farther, even to the beasts, and since the Lord would have mercy on them, so that his blessing would be partaken in common by the beasts and brute animals, the address was far more impressive. We hence see that the Prophet, for the best reason, directed his discourse to the very beasts, though destitute of mind and discernment. For in addressing brute animals he addressed men with double force; that is, he impressed their minds more effectually, so that they might seriously confess how great was God's wrath, and also how great would be his blessing.

Beasts, he says, *fear not*. Then the beasts of the field ought to have dreaded the judgment of God which he had before denounced; for except God had been pacified to his people, the fire of his wrath would have consumed the whole land, trees and pastures; so all the beasts must have been famished. But now when God is reconciled to his people, his blessing will smile on the brute animals. What then is to be said of men? For God is properly propitious to them, and not to brute animals. We hence see that the fruit of reconciliation is made more evident, when it is in part extended to the brute creation.

He therefore says, *Fear not, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the desert will grow, the trees will bring forth their*

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fruit. By these words the Prophet intimates, that had God's wrath toward his people been implacable, the sterility of the land would not have been improved. Now then whence came so sudden a change that the pastures grew, that the trees produced their fruits, both the fig-tree and the vine, except that God was pleased to bless the land, after having received men into favour? We now then apprehend the meaning of the Prophet, even this,—that the land would be made by an angry God to execute his judgment, and that there would be no remedy for the barrenness of the land until men propitiated God. This is the sum of the whole. It now follows—

23. Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first *month.*

23. Et filii Sion exultate, et gaudete in Jehova Deo vestro, quia dedit vobis pluviam ad justitiam (*alii vertunt*, Doctorem justitiæ; *sed de eo paulò pòst dicemus*) et descendere faciet vobis imbrem pluviam (*vel*, pluviam tempestivam, *ut vertunt: dicemus etiam de hac voce*) et pluviam in mense primo.

He now exhorts the Jews also to rejoice, but in a way different from that of the land and of the beasts. *Rejoice,* he says, *in your God.* For the beasts and the sheep, while rejoicing, cannot raise their thoughts higher than to their food: hence, the joy of brute animals, as they say, terminates in its object. But the Prophet sets forth God before the Jews as the ground of their joy. We then see how he distinguishes them from brute animals, from the land and other elements; for he not only bids them to rejoice in meat and drink, in the abundance of provisions, but he also bids them to rejoice in the Lord their God; and he says no more, "The land will yield its strength, or the vines and fig-trees, or the trees, will produce their fruit, and the pastures will grow;" no, he speaks not now in this manner, but he says, "God himself will give you rain:" for he had to do with men, endued with understanding, yea, with those very Jews, who had been from their childhood taught in the law of God: he speaks, not only of the land, not only of bread and wine, but of the Giver himself.

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He then reminds them of God's blessing, and declares that God would be so propitious to them as to pour down his grace upon them, and act the part of a father and a guardian towards them. God then, he says, will bring forth or give to you rain according to what is necessary. Some translate המורה, *emure*, a teacher; and the meaning of the word, we know, is doubtful. At the same time מורה, *mure*, is very often taken for rain, and sometimes generally, and sometimes for a particular kind of rain, as we shall presently see. Though then מורה, *mure*, signifies a teacher, yet the context here seems not to allow that sense. They who have thus taken it seem to have been led by this one reason,—that it is absurd to set in the first place, and as it were on a higher grade, those fading blessings which belong only to the support and nourishment of the body. But this reason is very foolish; for the Prophets, we know, lead children as it were by initial principles to a higher doctrine. No wonder then that the Prophet here affords them a taste of God's favour in blessings belonging to the body; he afterwards ascends higher, as we shall see: and this view is certainly what the context demands; for the Prophet says at last, "I will hereafter pour my Spirit on all flesh," &c. In these words the Prophet commends the favour of God, which ought to be held as the most valuable: but he begins now with temporal benefits, that he might lead by degrees, and by various steps, a people, rude and weak, to something higher.

Then the word, teacher, by no means suits this place; and we must mark also what immediately follows. He introduces a word derived from מורה, *mure;* he afterwards adds מורה, *mure*, the second time, which, no doubt, means rain; all confess this, and confess it to be taken for rain in the same verse. When all agree then on this point, it seems somewhat strained to render it in the same verse a teacher and also rain; especially since we find that the Prophet's object is this,—to make the people to recognise God's blessing in outward things. There is also another thing which has lead astray these interpreters. There follows immediately the word לצדקה, *latsadke*, according to what is just. When they join together these words, המורה לצדקה, *emure latsadke*, they ask, What

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is the rain of righteousness? They have hence thought that a teacher is here meant. But we know that משפט and צדקה, *meshapheth* and *tsadke*, are often taken in Scripture for a just measure, for equity. "God then will not deal with you unequally as hitherto; but having been reconciled to you, he will reassume the part of a father, and will also observe towards you a legitimate order; for things have been on both sides in confusion, inasmuch as ye have been carrying on war against God, and your wickedness has subverted the whole order of nature. But now, God being pacified towards you, there will be on both sides an equable state of things, everything will be in a fitting condition; he will not deal with you any more in an irregular manner." We now then perceive the real meaning of the Prophet, and see how frivolous are the reasons which influenced these interpreters, who have rendered the words, "Teacher of righteousness." I do not love strained expositions.

Let us now return to the words of the Prophet: *He will give to you*, he says, *rain according to what is fit;* then he adds, *He will make to descend on you showering rain*, (using another word;) and he adds again the word מורה, *mure*, which, no doubt, means rain, and no one denies this. But yet it seems that the word גשם, *geshem*, has here a specific meaning, and some think it to be a violent shower, occasioned by a storm or tempest; and yet we may gather from many parts of Scripture that the word means rain in general. Now מורה, *mure*, seems here to be taken for the rain of September, which the Greeks call πρώϊμον, *proïmon;* and so they call מלקוש, *melkush*, ὀψίμον, *opsimon*, or the latter rain, as a common interpreter has rendered it. And the cultivated land, we know, needs these two rains, that is, after sowing, and when the fruit is ripening,—after sowing, that the ground by receiving moisture may make the seed to grow; for it then wants moisture to nourish the roots. Hence, the rain of September or October, which is after sowing, is rightly called seasonable rain; and the Greeks, as I have already said, call it πρωΐμον, *proïmon;* and James, following them, so calls it in the fifth chapter, 'He will give you rain,' he says, 'both of the first time and the late rain,' that is, of the month of March. For in those

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warm climates the harvest, we know, is earlier than with us. We here gather the corn in July, but they gather it there in May. The fruit then ripens with them in March, when they need the late rain. And in the fifth chapter of Jeremiah it appears quite evident, that מורה, *mure*, as in this place, is called the rain, which comes down after sowing; for God says there, 'I will give you,' &c., and first he uses the general word, גשם, *geshem*, and then he adds the two kinds of rain, which are also mentioned here; and afterwards he adds, 'In their time,' that is, each rain in its time and season. Then מורה, *mure*, has its time, and מלקוש, *melkush*, also has its time; otherwise the words of the Prophet would not be consistent.

We now see what the Prophet means. Of the word מלקוש, *melkush*, we have said something in the sixth chapter of Hosea. Then the Prophet says now, that God would be so propitious to the Jews, as to neglect no means of testifying his favour towards them; for he would give them rain in the month of October and in the month of March, to fertilize the ground after sowing, and before the harvest or before the fruit came to maturity. Here then is promised to the Jews that the land would be made fertile by natural means. It now follows—

24. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil.

24. Et implebuntur horrea frumento et resonabunt torcularia vino (musto, *ad verbum: diximus de hac voce prius,*) et oleo.

He goes on with the same subject in this verse, and shows the effects of rain; for when the earth is irrigated and satiated with sufficient moisture, it brings forth fruit, rich and plentiful. God then will cause that the rains shall not be useless, for the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine as well as oil. He afterwards adds —

25. And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the canker-worm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm, my great army which I sent among you.

25. Et reddam vobis annos (pro aliis annis, *subaudiendum est*) quibus comedit locusta, bruchus, eruca (חסיל, *alii vertunt*, rubiginem: *sed dixi primo capite me non adeo solicitum esse de istis vocibus, quia etiam ignotæ sunt hodiè ipsis Judæis; sed certum est esse insecta, quæ corrumpunt omnes terræ fruges, ut tunc diximus,*) exercitus meus magnus, quem miseram ad vos.

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The Prophet confirms what he had previously said, and states what is of an opposite character,—that God can as easily restore a rich fruitfulness to the land as he had before rendered it barren by sending devouring insects. *I will give you years*, (for the other years,) he says; and that the Jews might more fully understand that all this was in God's hand, he expressly declares that the *cankerworms, the chafers, and the locusts*,[1] were his army, and as it were his hired army, whom he had employed as it seemed good to him. The spoilers, then, which had destroyed the whole produce of the land, were, as the Prophet declares, the messengers of God: it was not, he says, by chance that the locusts, or the cankerworms, or the chafers came; but God hired these soldiers, they were his forces and his army to distress the whole people; then famine and want consumed them. It is not then to no purpose that the Prophet mentions here that these destructive insects were God's army; it is to show more fully what is here promised; for God, who had by this army devoured the whole increase of the land, can now easily restore plenty for the barrenness of past years. Now, when any one lays down his arms, the land is afterwards cultivated, and brings forth its usual fruit: so the Lord also now shows, that the land had been barren, because he had sent forth his army, which laid waste its whole produce. But now, he says, when I shall restore you to favour, there will be no army to devour your fruit: the land then will nourish you, for there will be nothing to prevent you to receive its wonted produce.

Had not the Jews been made assured that the land had been sterile, because the locusts, and the chafers, and the cankerworms, were the army which the Lord had prepared, they might have ever dreaded these spoilers: "Surely the locusts will spring up, the chafers and the cankerworms will come, to devour all the fruit." The Prophet shows that this happened not by chance: "Now then, when God shall be reconciled to you, the land will yield its increase, and nothing shall hinder you from enjoying its abundance."

[1] There are four sorts mentioned in Hebrew as in the first chapter: one of them is omitted here and in the Latin text.—*Ed.*

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By calling this army *great*, he shows that God has no need of strong forces to subdue men; for when he prepares locusts and insects, which are but little things, they snatch food from the mouths of men and leave them in want; though no one puts forth a sword against them, they yet pine away with hunger. The Prophet then derides here the arrogance of men, and shows that God needs not do much, when he intends to reduce them to nothing. Let us now proceed—

26. And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.

26. Et comedetis comedendo et vos satiando, et laudabitis nomen Jehovæ Dei vestri; quia egit vobiscum mirabiliter (ad miraculum,) et non pudefiet populus meus in perpetuum.

He now concludes what he has hitherto said of God's blessing. As the Jews were starving while God was offended, so he promises that when reconciled to him they should have abundance of produce from the land: *Ye shall eat plentifully*, he says, *and satisfy yourselves*. But he mentions also their gratitude; for it was an evidence of true repentance when they praised the name of God, whom they understood to be the giver of their abundance; for he had before proved that the land was under his power, when he consumed its whole substance, so that none of it came to supply the wants of man. Hence the Prophet exhorts them to give thanks, that they might thus declare that they from the heart repented. *Ye shall* then *praise the name of Jehovah your God*. Why? *Because he will deal with you wonderfully*. He takes away here every plea for ignorance. We know how difficult it is to lead men to do this act of religion, for which we yet confess that we were born; for what is more natural than to acknowledge God's bounty towards us, when we enjoy many blessings? But yet, though God in various ways stimulates us, he cannot draw from us genuine gratitude. This is the reason why the Prophet now says, "God will deal with you wonderfully: though ye are stupid, God will yet by his power awaken you; for he will not deal with you in a common way." He then mentions something miraculous, that he might leave to the Jews no excuse, in case they considered not God's bounty, and perceived not in this change, first, what they had deserved,

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and then how merciful God had been to them: for this change could not have been ascribed to chance; nor was it a common thing, that when the Jews had been for four successive years nearly consumed with want, and when the enemy was at hand, they should see the land now fruitful, that they should see it freed from destructive insects, that they should be also at peace, and not disturbed by the dread of any foreign enemy. Since the Lord, then, would beyond hope give them a serene instead of a turbulent sky, should not such a wonderful change deeply affect them? This is what the Prophet now means,—"As the Lord will deal with you wonderfully, there will be no excuse for your torpidity, if ye will not be diligent in praising his name."

Not ashamed, he says, *shall my people be for ever*. The Jews are here reminded by implication of their former disgrace; for they had been greatly confounded; though enemies touched them not, no, not even with their finger, they yet died through famine; an enemy was also prepared, as we have seen, to destroy them. They were therefore frightened with dread, and also perplexed with their own evils, by which God had almost worn them out. The Prophet says now, *My people shall not be ashamed for ever*, intimating that God would at length relieve his people from their evils, that they might not, as hitherto, be ashamed. He at last subjoins—

27. And ye shall know that I *am* in the midst of Israel, and *that* I *am* the Lord your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

27. Et cognoscetis, quia in medio Israel ego, et ego Jehova Deus vester, et nullus præterea: et non pudefiet populus meus in seculum.

He repeats the same sentence; and in the beginning of the verse he unfolds what I have already said—that the miracle would be such as to constrain the people to praise God. *Ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel:* and this was the case, because God showed not in an ordinary way his kindness to them, and especially because it had been foretold, and also because this reason had been adduced—that God was mindful of his covenant. The manner, then, in which he dealt with them, and farther, the prediction itself, left to the people no pretext for ignorance. Hence the

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Prophet now says, 'Ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,' and still more, 'that I am Jehovah your God.' By these words the Prophet reminds us, that the deliverance of the people from their evils was to be wholly ascribed to the gratuitous mercy of God; for we have already seen, that things would have been past hope, had not this consolation been added—'Turn ye even now to me.' The Prophet therefore repeats, that there would be no other reason why God would deal so kindly with his people, and so mercifully spare them, but this—that he dwelt in the midst of Israel: but whence was this dwelling, except that God had gratuitously chosen this people? This indeed availed much to raise up the people; for how could they have hoped that God would be propitious to them, had they not been reminded of this truth —that God was dwelling in the midst of them? not because they were worthy, but because he deigned to come down to them.

He afterwards adds, *And none else.* By this sentence the Prophet more sharply stimulates them to return immediately to God; for if they deferred longer disappointment would be in delay. That the Jews, then, might not, after their usual manner, procrastinate, he says that there is no other God; and thus he shows that there was no remedy for their evils, except they sought to be reconciled to God. "There is then no God besides me, and I dwell in the midst of thee." The Lord claims to himself every power, and then kindly invites the people to himself, and for this reason,—because he dwells in the midst of them. That the people, then, might not form other expectations, God shows that all their hope was in him alone. He farther shows, that salvation was not to be sought afar off, provided the people had not forgotten the covenant, —that God was dwelling in the midst of them. But a higher doctrine follows—

28. And it shall come to pass afterwards, *that* I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.

28. Et accidet post sic (*hoc est*, postea,) effundam Spiritum meum super omnem carnem: et prophetabunt filii vestri et filiæ vestræ: senes vestri somnia sommabunt: juvenes vestri (*aut*, viri electi) visiones videbunt.

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We have explained why the Prophet began with earthly blessings. One may indeed think that this order is not regular; for Christ does not in vain remind us, that the kingdom of God ought to be first sought, and that other things shall be added in their place, (Matth. vi.;) for food, and every thing that belongs to this frail life, are, as it were, additions to the spiritual life. But the Prophet designedly mentioned first the evidence of God's favour in outward benefits; for we see how slow the perceptions of men are, and how slothful they are in seeking spiritual life. As, then, men rise to things above with so much difficulty, the Prophet makes use of the best helps; and we must indeed be dealt with as we usually deal with children. For as there is not so much discernment in them as to be influenced by reasons, we set before them what is suitable to their weak and simple comprehension; so the Prophet did; for he showed first that God would be kind to the Jews in food for the body, and having used this as a help, he then added, *Afterwards I will pour my Spirit upon all flesh.*

By these words the Prophet reminds us, that people act absurdly when they are satisfied with vanishing things, when they ask of God nothing more excellent than to be pampered like brute animals; for in what do the children of God differ from asses and dogs, except they aspire after spiritual life? The Prophet, then, after having set before them lower things, as though they were children, now brings before them a more solid doctrine, (for thus they were to be led,) and affords them a taste of the favour of God in its external signs. "Ascend, then, now," he says, "to spiritual life: for the fountain is one and the same; though when earthly benefits occupy and engross your attention, ye no doubt pollute them. But God feeds you, not to fill and pamper you; for he would not have you to be like brute animals. Then know that your bodies are fed, and that God gives support to you, that ye may aspire after spiritual life; for he leads you to this as by the hand; be this then your object." We now, then, understand why the Prophet did not at first speak of the spiritual grace of God; but he comes to it now. He began with temporal benefits, for it was needful that an untutored people

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should be thus led by degrees, that on account of their infirmity, sluggishness, and dulness, they might thus make better progress, until they understood that God would for this end be a Father to them.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we want so many aids while in this frail life, and as it is a shadowy life, we cannot pass a moment, except thou dost continually, and at all times, supply through thy bounty what is needful,—O grant, that we may so profit by thy so many benefits, that we may learn to raise our minds upwards, and ever aspire after celestial life, to which by thy gospel thou invitest us so kindly and sweetly every day, that being gathered into thy celestial kingdom, we may enjoy that perfect felicity, which has been procured for us by the blood of thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lecture Forty-fifth.

And it shall be, that I shall afterwards pour my Spirit upon all flesh, and prophesy shall your sons and your daughters, and your old men shall dreams dream, and your young men shall visions see. We mentioned in our last lecture why the Prophet now at length speaks of the spiritual grace of God, having before spoken of earthly blessings. The order may seem indeed irregular; but it can be easily accounted for. The Prophet said first that God, being reconciled to the people, would openly manifest this by external proofs, by restoring abundance of wine and corn; for the almost wearing out of the people by famine and want, being the evidence of God's vengeance, the Prophet made the testimony of reconciliation to be in tokens of a contrary kind. But as the restoration of the Church consists not either in the fruitfulness of the land, or in the abundance of provisions, the Prophet now raises higher the thoughts of the godly, and makes them to look for the spiritual grace of God: hence he says, *I shall afterwards pour my Spirit upon all flesh.*

The Prophet, no doubt, promises here something greater than what the fathers under the Law had experienced. The gift of the Spirit, we know, was enjoyed even by the ancients;

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but the Prophet promises not what the faithful had before found; but, as we have said, something greater: and this may easily be gathered from the word here used, "pour out;" for שָׁפַךְ, *shephek*, means not to distil, but to pour forth in great abundance; and God did not pour out his Holy Spirit so abundantly and so largely under the law, as after the manifestation of Christ. Since, then, the gift of the Spirit was more copiously given to the Church after the advent of Christ, the Prophet uses here an unwonted expression—that God would *pour out* his Spirit.

Another circumstance is added, *upon all flesh.* Though the Prophets, as we know, had formerly their colleges, yet they were but few in number. As then the gift of prophecy was rare among the Jews, the Prophet, in order to show that God would deal more bountifully to his new Church when restored, says, that he would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh. He then intimates that all in common would be partakers of the gift of the Spirit, and of its rich abundance, while under the law a few had but a sparing taste of it. We now then perceive the design of the Prophet; it was to make a manifest difference between the state of the ancient people and the state of the new Church, of the restoration of which he now speaks. The comparison is, that God would not only endow a few with his Spirit, but the whole mass of the people, and then that he would enrich his faithful with all kinds of gifts, so that the Spirit would seem to be poured forth in full abundance: *I will* then *pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.* We hence learn how absurdly the Greek interpreter has rendered this, "I will pour out from my Spirit:" for he diminishes this promise by saying, "From my Spirit," as though God promised here some small portion of his Spirit; while, on the contrary, the Prophet speaks of abundance, and intended to express it.

It follows, *Prophesy shall your sons and your daughters.* The Prophet now proceeds to explain what he had said, unfolding at large what he meant by the expression, "upon all flesh," which was this,—that the whole people would prophesy, or that the gift of prophecy would be common and prevail every where among all the Jews, in a new and unusual

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manner. The ancients had also Prophets, though in number few; but now the Prophet extends this gift and favour to all orders: Prophesy then shall your sons and your daughters, he says, so that he does not exclude women.

He afterwards mentions two kinds of prophesying, *Your old men shall dreams dream, and your young men shall visions see.* "Young men" mean literally "chosen," בחורים, *bechurim:* but as in middle age strength prevails most in man, those who possess vigour and judgment, and as yet retain their strength, are called "chosen:" hence by "chosen" he means those of mature age. When God manifested himself to the Prophets, it was usually done, we know, by dreams and visions, as it is said in the twelfth chapter of Numbers: this was, as we may say, the ordinary method. The Prophet now refers to these two modes of communication, and says, that the gift of prophecy would be common to men and women, to the old and those of middle age. We now perceive the import of this verse. There is then no difference between dreams and visions, only the Prophet mentions these two kinds, that readers might better understand, that what the Prophet had stated before generally would be common to all.

But I have already said that this prophecy must be referred to the advent of Christ; for we know that what is here described was not fulfilled until after Christ appeared in the world: and the Prophet now preaches of the new restoration of the Church, which, we know, was suspended until the Gospel was proclaimed. Let us now then see whether God, after Christ was revealed, performed what he had spoken by his Prophet. Peter, in the second chapter of the Acts, says, that this prophecy was fulfilled when the Spirit was sent. But it may be objected, that all were not endued with the gift of prophecy, even when God opened all the treasures of his grace; and Paul says, that they were not all prophets even when the Church especially flourished; and experience proves the same. How then could Peter say, that this—that God would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh, was fulfilled? To give a reply to this is not difficult: let us only remember, that the Prophet speaks comparatively, as the Scripture is wont to do.

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He affirms not in express terms that all would be partakers of this gift, but that in comparison with the ancient Church, this gift would be as it were common, and that it was so is well known: for if any one compares the ancient Church with that abundance which God vouchsafed to his people after Christ's advent, he will certainly find true what I say—that the Spirit of God, who was given only to few under the law, was poured out upon all flesh. True then is what the Prophet says, provided this contrast is to be understood—that God was much more bountiful towards his new Church than formerly towards the fathers: for the Prophets then were not many, but they were many under the gospel.

We must also remember that the Prophet hyperbolically extols the grace of God; for such is our stupidity and dulness, that we can never sufficiently comprehend the grace of God, except it is set forth to us in hyperbolical language; nor is there indeed any excess in the thing itself, if we take a right view of it: but as we hardly understand the hundredth part of God's gifts, when he presents them before our eyes, it was needful to add a commendation, calculated to elevate our thoughts. The Spirit of God is then constrained to speak hyperbolically on account of our torpidity or rather carelessness. We need not however to fear, lest our thoughts should go beyond the words; for when God would carry us above the heavens, we can hardly ascend two or three feet.

We now then perceive why the Prophet mentions all flesh without exception: first, there were more Prophets, as I have said, under the gospel than under the law; hence, the comparison is very suitable;—and, secondly, the Prophet speaks not here of the public office of teaching, for he calls those Prophets who had not been called to teach, but who were endued with so much of the light of truth, that they might be compared with the Prophets; and certainly the knowledge which flourished in the primitive Church was such, that the meanest were in many respects equal to the ancient Prophets; for what did God confer on the ancient Prophets except the power of foretelling something to come? It was a special gift, and very limited. Besides, these predictions are hardly worthy to be compared with the celestial wisdom made known

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in the gospel. Faith then after the coming of Christ, if rightly estimated according to its value, far excels the gift of prophecy. And so the Prophet here, not without reason, dignifies with so honourable name those who were private men, and to whom was not intrusted the office of teaching among the people, but who were only illuminated; for their light was much superior to the gift of prophecy in many of those who lived under the law. We now understand what the Prophet means when he makes the Spirit of God to be common, without distinction, to all the godly, so that they possess what excels the gift of prophesying.

Now, as to the two kinds of gifts mentioned here, it must be observed, that the Prophet spoke according to what was commonly known among the people: for as the Jews were accustomed to dreams and visions, the Prophet therefore made use of these terms; and this manner of speaking occurs often in the Prophets, and it ought to be borne in mind by us. When they speak of the worship of God, they mention sacrifices, 'They shall come and bring frankincense and gold; they shall lead camels laden with the wealth of the land.' In short, in their prophecies they raise altars and build a temple: and yet no such things were seen after Christ appeared: for the Gentiles came not to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices; nay, shortly after the temple was destroyed, there was no altar among them, and the whole legal worship ceased. What then is to be understood by such expressions, as—that people shall come from all places to sacrifice together? Even this—They set forth under a visible form the spiritual worship of God. It is so in this place; as it was the usual way among the ancients that God manifested himself by dreams and visions to the Prophets, so he says, *your old men shall dreams dream, and your young men shall visions see:* but the Prophet no doubt sets forth under these forms of speech that light of knowledge in which the new Church excelled after Christ appeared: he indeed compares the light of faith to prophecy, as we have already stated; but he accommodates his manner of speaking or his discourse to the comprehension of his people, for he knew whom he addressed. All the Prophets have followed the same rule; 'There shall be

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offered a sacrifice,' says Malachi, 'from the rising to the setting of the sun.' What is this sacrifice? The Papists take this for the mass; "Then under the kingdom of Christ there is to be some sacrifice; and we do not now offer to God sheep and calves; it therefore follows, that there is to be the sacrifice of bread and wine:" and this is said, as though the Prophet had thus refinedly philosophized on the word, sacrifice, while he was teaching a rude people according to what they could bear. But what he meant was, that the worship of God would be universal among all nations. The same thing is intended by Joel when he says, *I shall pour forth my Spirit upon all flesh: your old men shall dreams dream, and your young men shall visions see.* We now see the whole meaning of the Prophet. Now it follows—

29. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.

29. Atque etiam super servos et super ancillas in diebus illis effundam Spiritum meum.

As the particle גַּם, *gam*, amplifies in Hebrew, it seems singular that the Prophet now limits to a few a gift common to all; for he had previously said, "Upon all flesh will I pour out my Spirit;" and now, "Upon servants and handmaids;" and he puts down "Also." If he had simply said, "Upon servants and handmaids will I pour out my Spirit," there would have been no inconsistency, for it would have been the explanation of his former statement; for we know that what the Prophet says of all men must be taken with exception, inasmuch as many who were unbelievers were without this gift, and even those who before excelled in some sort of divine knowledge; we indeed know that the Jews were blinded, and we also know that not all among the common people were partakers of this excellent gift. There is no doubt, therefore, but that this which is said of "all flesh," must be limited to the Church. It would not, then, have appeared strange, had the Prophet now added, "Upon servants and handmaids;" but the particles וְגַם, *ugam*, "And also," create a difficulty: it is a way of speaking to enlarge on what has been said, but here it seems not to enlarge; for to pour out the Spirit upon all the people, is more than to pour it out on

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servants and handmaids. The solution is twofold: the particles, גַּם, *ugam*, are sometimes to be taken confirmatively. 'I have blessed him,' said Isaac of his son Jacob, 'and also blessed shall he be.' So in this place we may take the words of the Prophet to be, *yea surely*, being a repetition serving to confirm what had been said: but I prefer another sense; for the Prophet, I doubt not, meant here to add something more incredible than what he had previously said, "Upon servants and maid-servants will I pour out my Spirit," that is, even upon those who were before Prophets; for they shall be enriched with a new gift, and shall gain increasing knowledge after the restoration of the Church, which is now approaching. We apprehend this to be the meaning of the Prophet. He had promised the grace of the Spirit to the whole body of the faithful, which appears, as I have said, from comparing the ancient state with our own: but now, after having spoken of the mass or the common people, he comes to the Prophets, who were superior to others, who before performed the office of teaching, who attained rank and degree in the Church; these also shall gain accessions; that is, "My Spirit shall not only be conspicuous in the ignorant and the common people, but also in the Prophets themselves."

Surely it is a greater thing when they are taught who were before superior to others, and whom the Lord had set over the Church, and when they appear as new men, after having received a gift which the Lord had not previously conferred on them. When, therefore, new light appears in such men, it is certainly a greater thing than when the Spirit is poured out on the common people. We now then see the Prophet's meaning as to the servants and the handmaids.[1]

[1] However true in itself is what is here advanced, yet the exposition seems rather too refined, and what the passage does not require. The difficulty stated will vanish, when we consider that "all flesh" is a general expression, afterwards particularised and limited: and "all flesh," according to what is subsequently specified, evidently means all conditions of men, men in all states and of every age, and not the whole of mankind. "And also," in verse 29, is very emphatical, as the persons afterwards mentioned were of the lowest grade, "servants and handmaids," that is, slaves: and such were many of the first converts to Christianity. See Gal. iii. 28; Col. iii. 11. Though the word for 'servants' does not necessarily mean those in a servile condition, yet it has that meaning. The

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He then repeats, *For three days*, intimating that so sudden and incredible the change will be, that Prophets will seem to have been before untaught men; for a much more excellent doctrine shall be given them. Then God shall so pour out his Spirit, that all the ancient prophecies will appear obscure and of no value, compared with the great and extraordinary light which Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, will bring at his rising. And he mentions "handmaids," for there were, we know, Prophetesses under the Law. Let us now go on—

30. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.
31. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.

30. Et ponam (statuam) prodigia in cœlis et terra, sanguinem et ignem et columnas nubis.
31. Sol vertetur in tenebras et luna in sanguinem, antequam veniat dies Jehovæ magnus et terribilis.

The Prophet seems here to contradict himself; for he had hitherto promised that God would deal kindly and bountifully with his people; and every thing he has said tended to elevate the spirits of the people and fill them with joy: but now he seems again to threaten them with God's wrath and to strike miserable men with fear, who had not as yet a breathing time; for at the time the Prophet spoke, the Jews, we know, were in the greatest sorrow. What then is his purpose in adding a new cause of grief, as though they had not sorrow and lamentation enough? But it is rather an admonition than a threatening. The Prophet warns them of what would be, lest the faithful should promise themselves some happy condition in this world, and an exemption from all cares and troubles; for we know how prone men are to self-indulgence. When God promises any thing, they flatter themselves, and harbour vain thoughts, as though they were beyond the reach of harm, and free from every grief and every evil. Such indulgence the flesh contrives for itself. Hence the Prophet reminds us, that though God would bountifully

same is true of the word for handmaids. Hagar, expressly called a bondwoman by Paul, is called by this name, Gen. xvi. 1. And to view the words as signifying slaves, would make the prophecy more striking, as being literally fulfilled at the first promulgation of the Gospel. —*Ed.*

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feed his Church, supply his people with food, and testify by external tokens his paternal love, and though also he would pour out his Spirit, (a token far more remarkable,) yet the faithful would continue to be distressed with many troubles; for God designs not to deal too delicately with his Church on earth; but when he gives tokens of his kindness, he at the same time mingles some exercises for patience, lest the faithful should become self-indulgent or sleep on earthly blessings, but that they may ever seek higher things.

We now then understand the Prophet's design: he intends not to threaten the faithful, but rather to warn them, lest they should deceive themselves with empty dreams, or expect what is never to be, that is, to enjoy a happy rest in this world. Besides, the Prophet regards also another thing: we know indeed that men are hardly led to seek the grace of God, except when they are, as it were, forcibly drawn; hence spiritual life is neglected, and whatever belongs to the celestial kingdom, when we have all kinds of supplies on earth. The Prophet then commends here the spiritual grace of which he speaks, for this reason,—that the condition of men would be miserable, were not the Lord to exhilarate their minds and refresh them with the comfort which we have already noticed. —How so? *There will be prodigies in heaven and on earth, the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood,* and all things shall be in disorder and in horrible darkness. What then would become of men, were not God to shine on them by the grace of his Spirit, to support them under such a confusion in heaven and on earth, and to show himself to be their Father?

We then see that this was added for the fuller commendation of God's grace, that men might know, that they would be much more miserable if God called them not to himself by the shining light of his Spirit. And that this was the Prophet's design, we may learn from the discourse of Christ, which he made to his disciples a short time before his death. They asked what would be the sign of his coming, when he reminded them of the destruction of the temple, (Matth. xxiv.) They thought that he would immediately accomplish that triumph of which they had heard, that they would be

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made participators of that eternal beatitude of which Christ had so often spoken to them. Christ then warned them not to be deluded with so gross a notion. He spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem, and then declared that all these things would be only the presages of evils—"These," he says, "shall be only the preludes; for tumults will arise, wars shall be, and all places will be full of calamities; in a word, there will be an immense mass of all evils." As Christ then corrected the mistake, with which the minds of the disciples were imbued, so the Prophet here checks vain imaginations, lest the faithful should think that Christ's kingdom would be earthly, and fix their minds on corn and wine, on pleasures and quietness, on the conveniences of the present life: I will give you, he says, *prodigies in heaven and on earth, blood, fire, and dark clouds; the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before it shall come—the day of Jehovah, great and terrible.*

We now see why the Prophet adds here this sad catalogue, and how well these things harmonise together,—that God would testify his paternal love by the manifestation of Christ, —and that he would exhibit tokens of his wrath, which would fill the whole world with anxiety and fear.

What he says of blood and darkness is, no doubt, to be taken metaphorically for a disordered state of things; for we know that calamities are often compared to obscurity and darkness. It is the same as though he said, "So great will be the succession of evils, that the whole order of nature will seem to be subverted, that the very elements will put on a new form; the sun, which illuminates the earth, will be turned into darkness, the moon into blood; the calamities which shall come will take away every token of God's kindness. Then nothing will remain, but that men, sunk, as it were, in the deepest abyss of all evils, will seek some spark of grace from God and never find it; for heaven will be dark, the earth will be covered with thick darkness." We then see that the Prophet does not express what would be, word for word, nor is he to be understood as speaking, as they say, literally, but he uses a figurative mode of speaking, by which he sets forth such a dreadful state of things, that the very

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elements would put on a new appearance; for the sun would not any more perform its office, and the moon would refuse its light to the earth. As God, then, would take away all tokens of his favour, so the Prophet, by blood, by darkness, and by dark clouds, sets forth metaphorically that sorrow, by which the minds of men would necessarily be possessed.

Now, if any one asks, why by the coming of Christ was God's wrath more stirred up against men? for this may seem to be without reason. To this I answer, that it was, as it were, accidental: for if Christ had been received as he ought to have been, if all embraced him with due reverence, he would have certainly been the giver, not only of spiritual grace, but also of earthly happiness. The felicity of all, then, would have in every respect been made complete by the coming of Christ, had not their wickedness and ingratitude kindled up anew the wrath of God; and we see what a flood of evils burst forth immediately after the preaching of the gospel. Now when we consider how severely God afflicted his people formerly, we cannot but say that much heavier have been the calamities inflicted on the world since the manifestation of Christ,—whence this? Even because the world's ingratitude had arrived to its highest point, as indeed it is at this day: for the light of the gospel has gone forth again, and God has exhibited himself to the world as a Father, and we see how great is the wickedness and perversity of men in rejecting the gifts of God; we see some contemptuously rejecting the gospel, and others impelled by satanic fury to resist the doctrine of Christ; we see them making a boast of their blasphemies, and we see them kindled with cruel rage and breathing slaughters against the children of God; we see the world full of ungodly men and of the despisers of God; we see an awful contempt of God's grace prevailing everywhere; we see such an unbridled licentiousness in wickedness, that it ought to make us ashamed of ourselves and weary of our life. Since, then, the world is so ungrateful for such a favour, is it a wonder that God should show more dreadful tokens of his vengeance? For certainly at this day, when we closely examine the condition of the world, we find that all are miserable, and even those who applaud

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themselves, and whom the world admire as semigods. How can it be otherwise? The common people, doubtless, groan under their miseries, and that because God thus punishes the contempt of his grace, which he has again offered to us, and which is so unworthily rejected. Inasmuch, then, as so base an ingratitude on the part of men has provoked God's wrath, it is no wonder that the sound of his scourges is everywhere heard: for the servant who knows his lord's will and does it not, is worthy, as Christ declares, of heavier stripes, (Luke xii.) And what happens through the whole world is, that after God has shown by his gospel, after Christ has everywhere proclaimed reconciliation, they now openly fall away, and show that they prefer having God angry than propitious to them: for when the gospel is rejected, what else is it but to declare war against God, and to scorn and not to receive the reconciliation which God is ready to give, and of which he treats of his own accord with men?

It is then no wonder that the Prophet says here, that the world would be full of darkness after the appearance of Christ, who is the Sun of Righteousness, and who hath shone upon us with his salvation: but it was, as it were, accidental, that God exhibited himself with so much severity to the world, when yet it was the acceptable time, when it was the day of salvation and of good-will; for the world suffered not that to be fulfilled which God had promised to us by the Prophet Joel, nor received the Spirit of adoption, when they might have safely fled to God; nay, when God was ready to cherish them in his own bosom. But since they were refractory and untractable, it was necessary for God to visit such perverseness in an unusual manner. It is no wonder then that the Prophet says, that *in those days there shall be prodigies in heaven and on earth, for the sun shall be turned into darkness*, &c., *before it shall come—the day of Jehovah, great and terrible.*

It may be asked what day the Prophet refers to: for he has hitherto spoken of the first coming of Christ; and there seems to be some inconsistency in this place. I answer, that the Prophet includes the whole kingdom of Christ, from the beginning to the end; and this is well understood, and in

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other places we have stated that the Prophets commonly speak in this manner: for when the discourse is concerning Christ's kingdom, they sometimes refer to its commencement only, and sometimes they speak of its termination; but they often mark out by one delineation the whole course of the kingdom of Christ, from its beginning to its end; and such is the case here. The Prophet, by saying, 'After those days I will pour out my Spirit,' no doubt meant, that this, as we have explained, would be fulfilled when Christ should commence his kingdom, and make it known through the teaching of the gospel: Christ poured out then his Spirit. But as the kingdom of Christ is not for a few days, or for a short time, but continues its course to the end of the world, the Prophet turns his attention to that day or that time, and says, "There shall, in the meanwhile, be the greatest calamities: and whosoever shall not flee to the grace of God shall be very miserable; they shall never find rest nor comfort, nor the light of life, for the world shall be sunk in darkness; and God shall take away from the sun, the moon, the elements, and all other aids, the tokens of his favour; and he will show himself everywhere to be angry and offended with men." The Prophet further shows, that these evils of which he speaks would not be for a few days or a few years, but perpetual; 'Before,' he says, 'the day of Jehovah, great and terrible, shall come.' In short, he means that all the scourges of God, which he had hitherto mentioned, would be, as it were, preparations to subdue the hearts of men, that they might with reverence and submission receive Christ. As, therefore, men carry by nature a high spirit, and cannot bend their neck to receive the yoke of Christ, hence the Prophet says here that they were to be subdued by severe scourges, when God would remove all evidences of his love, and fill heaven and earth with dread. Thus, then, he would in a manner change the hardness and contumacy which is innate in men, that they might know that they had to do with God. And, at the same time, the Prophet reminds them, that unless they were amended by these scourges, something more dreadful remained for them,—the Judge would at last come from heaven, not only to clothe the sun

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and moon in darkness, but to turn life into death. It would, indeed, be far better for the reprobate to die a hundred times than always to live and thus to sustain eternal death in life itself.

The Prophet then means, that men persisting in their obstinacy shall meet with something more grievous and more ruinous than the evils of this life, for they must all at last stand before the tribunal of the celestial Judge: for the day of Jehovah, great and terrible, will come. He refers, in this sentence, to unbelievers and rebels against God; for when Christ shall come, he will be a Redeemer to the godly; no day in their whole life will shine on them so pleasantly; so far will this day be from bringing terror and fear to them, that they are bidden, while expecting it, to lift up their heads, which is a token of cheerfulness and joy. But as the Prophet Joel's object was to humble the confident pride of the flesh, and as he addressed the refractory and the rebellious, it is no wonder that he sets before them what is terrific and dreadful.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are now surrounded on every side by so many miseries, and as our condition is such, that amidst groans and continual sorrows, our life could be hardly sustained without being supported by spiritual grace,—O grant, that we may learn to look on the face of thine Anointed, and seek comfort from him, and such a comfort as may not engross our minds, or at least not retain us in the world, but raise our thoughts to heaven, and daily seal to our hearts the testimony of our adoption, and that though many evils must be borne by us in this world, we may yet continue to pursue our course, and to fight and to strive with invincible perseverance, until having at length finished all our struggles, we reach that blessed rest, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lecture Forty-sixth.

32. And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount

32. Et erit, quisquis invocaverit nomen Jehovæ liberabitur: quia in monte Sion et

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Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

in Jerusalem erit evasio, sicuti promisit Jehova, et in residuis quos Jehova vocaverit.

We said yesterday that the Prophet denounced future calamities, that he might thus stimulate men, distressed by many evils, to seek God: we indeed know how tardy we are by nature, except the Lord goads us continually. The subject, then, on which we discoursed yesterday tended to show, that as so many and so grievous calamities would press on the Jews, all would be miserable who fled not to God, and that this consolation only would remain to them in their extreme evils: but now the Prophet seasonably adds, *Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.* Having then stimulated men to seek God, he now gives them a firm assurance of being saved, provided they in sincerity and from the heart fled to God.

This is indeed a remarkable passage, for God declares that the invocation of his name in a despairing condition is a sure port of safety. What the Prophet had said was certainly dreadful,—that the whole order of nature would be so changed, that no spark of light would appear, and that all places would be filled with darkness. What, therefore, he says now is the same as though he declared, that if men called on the name of God life would be found in the grave. They who seem to be even in despair, and from whom God seems to have taken away every hope of grace, provided they call on the name of God, will be saved, as the Prophet declares, though they be in so great a despair, and in so deep an abyss. This circumstance ought to be carefully noticed; for if any one takes this sentence of the Prophet by itself, though then it would not be frigid, it would not yet be so striking; but when these two things are joined together,—that God will be the judge of the world, who will not spare the wickedness of men, but will execute dreadful vengeance,—and that yet salvation will be given to all who will call on the name of the Lord, we see how efficacious the promise is; for God offers life to us in death, and light in the darkest grave.

There is, therefore, great importance in the expression, והיה, *ueie,* 'Then it shall be;' for the copulative is to be regarded

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as an adverb of time, 'Then whosoever shall invoke the name of the Lord,' &c. And he uses the word "deliver;" for it was needful to show that the saved differ nothing from the lost. Had the Prophet used the word "preserve," he would have spoken less distinctly; but now when he promises deliverance, he bids us to set up this shield against trials even the heaviest; for God possesses power sufficiently great to deliver us, provided only we call on him.

We now then understand what the Prophet had in view: He shows that God would have us to call on him, not only in prosperity, but also in the extreme state of despair. It is the same as though God had called to himself the dead, and declared that it was in his power to restore life to them and bring them out of the grave. Since then God invites here the lost and the dead, there is no reason why even the heaviest distresses should preclude an access for us or for our prayers; for we ought to break through all these obstacles. The more grievous, then, our troubles are, the more confidence we ought to entertain; for God offers his grace, not only to the miserable, but also to those in utter despair. The Prophet did not threaten a common evil to the Jews, but declared that by the coming of Christ all things would be full of horror: after this denunciation he now subjoins, 'Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.'

But as Paul cites this place in Rom. x., and extends it to the Gentiles, we must inquire in what sense he takes the testimony of the Prophet. Paul means to prove that adoption was common to the Gentiles, that it was lawful for them to flee to God, and familiarly to invoke him as a Father: 'Whosoever,' he says, 'shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' He hence proves that the Gospel ought to have been preached even to the Gentiles, as invocation arises from faith: for except God shines on us by his word, we cannot come to him; faith, then, is ever the mother of prayer. Paul seems to lay stress on the universal particle, *Whosoever;* as though he said, that Joel did not speak of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles, that he testified that God would indiscriminately, and without exception, receive all who would seek him. But Paul appears to misapply the Prophet's

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words; for Joel no doubt addresses here the people, to whom he was appointed as a teacher and prophet. What Paul then applies generally to all mankind seems not to have been so intended by the Prophet. But to this there is an easy answer; for the Prophet, after having spoken of the kingdom of Christ, had no doubt this truth in view, that the blessing in the seed of Abraham had been promised to all nations; and when he afterwards described the miserable state in which the whole world would be, he certainly meant to rouse even the Gentiles, who had been aliens from the Church, to seek God in common with his elect people: the promise, then, which immediately follows, is also addressed to the Gentiles, otherwise there would be no consistency in the discourse of the Prophet. We therefore see that Paul most fitly accommodates this place to his subject: for the main thing to be held is this, that the blessing in Christ was promised not only to the children of Abraham, but also to all the Gentiles. When, therefore, the Prophet describes the kingdom of Christ, it is no wonder that he addresses the Jews and Gentiles in common: and then, what he said of the state of the world, that it would be full of horrible darkness, undoubtedly refers, not to the Jews only, but also to the Gentiles. Why was this done, except to show that nothing else remains for them but to flee to God? We then see that an access is here opened to the Gentiles, that they may with one consent call on God together with the Jews.

If there is promised salvation and deliverance to all who shall call on the name of the Lord, it follows, as Paul reasons, that the doctrine of the Gospel belongs to the Gentiles also; for their mouths must have otherwise been closed, yea, and the mouths of us all: had not God himself anticipated us by his word, and exhorted us to pray, we must have been dumb. It would have been a great presumption in us to present ourselves before God, except he had given us confidence and promised to hear us. If then the liberty of praying is common to all, it follows that the doctrine of salvation is common to all. We must now also add, that as *deliverance is promised to all who shall call on the name of God*, his own power is taken from God, when salvation is sought in any other but in him

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alone: and we know that this is an offering which he claims exclusively for himself. If, then, we desire to be delivered, the only remedy is, to call on the name of Jehovah.

He afterwards adds, *For in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as Jehovah hath promised.* The Prophet here intimates, that though the people might seem apparently to have been destroyed, yet God would be mindful of his covenant so as to gather the remnant. Such, indeed, was the slaughter of the people, that no hope whatever, according to the flesh, remained; for they were scattered through various parts of the world; there was no social body, no distinct nation, no civil government, no worship of God. Who, then, could have thought that the Church of God would survive? Nay, the probability was, that after thirty or fifty years, the name of Abraham and of his seed would have become wholly extinct; for they had joined in one body with the Chaldees and the Assyrians. That scattering then was, as it were, the death of the whole nation. But God, by Joel, declares here, that there would yet be *deliverance in mount Zion and in Jerusalem;* that is, "Though I shall for a time exterminate this people, that the land may remain desolate, there shall yet be a restoration, and I will again gather a certain body, a Church, on mount Zion and in Jerusalem." This is the substance.

We learn from this place, that however much God may afflict his Church, it will yet be perpetuated in the world; for it can no more be destroyed than the very truth of God, which is eternal and immutable. God indeed promises, not only that the state of the Church shall be perpetual, but that there will be, as long as the sun and moon shall shine in heaven, some people on earth to call on his name. Since it is so, it follows, that the Church cannot be utterly subverted or wholly perish, however severely and heavily the Lord may chastise it. However great then the scattering of the Church may be, the Lord will yet gather members, that there may be a people on earth to show, that he who is in heaven is true and faithful to his promises. And this truth deserves a careful attention; for when we see the Church scattered, immediately this doubt creeps into our minds, "Does God intend

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wholly to destroy all his people,—does he mean to exterminate all the seed of the faithful?" Then let this passage be remembered, "In mount Zion there will be deliverance," after the Lord shall have punished the profane despisers of his name, who abused his patience, and falsely professed his name.

But he adds, *As Jehovah has promised*, which serves for confirmation; for the Prophet bids us here to regard God rather than our own state. When indeed we believe our eyes, we cannot but think sometimes that it is all over with the Church; for when God inflicts heavy punishment on his servants, there seems to us no remedy; and when we believe the diseases of the Church to be incurable, our hearts immediately fail us, except God's promise comes to our minds. Hence the Prophet recalls our thoughts to God, as though he had said, "Judge not of the safety of the Church by sight, but stand and rely on the word of God: he hath spoken, he hath said, that the Church shall be perpetual." Let us plant our foot on this promise, and never doubt but that the Lord will perform what he has declared.

But it is subjoined by the Prophet as a sort of correction, *And in the remnant whom Jehovah shall call:* and it was necessary to state this distinctly, lest hypocrites, as they usually do, abuse what had been said. They who occupy high stations in the Church, and pass in name for the children of God, swell, we know, with great confidence, and boldly trifle with God; for they think that he is bound to them, when they make a show either of external badges or of profession, in which they glory before men: they think this display sufficient. We may indeed gather from many parts of Scripture, that the Jews were inflated with this false presumption of the flesh, that they imagined God to be bound to them. Hence the Prophet shows, that he did not address all the Jews indiscriminately, because many of them were spurious children of Abraham, and had become degenerated. If then under this pretence alone they wished to lay hold on the promise of salvation, the Prophet shows that they were excluded from the Church of God, since they were not legitimate children, after having departed from the faith and piety of their father

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Abraham. He therefore mentions *remnant:* and by this word he means, in short, that the whole multitude would not be saved, but only a small number.

When therefore we speak of the salvation of the Church, we ought not to gather into one bundle all who profess themselves to be the children of God; for we see that hardly one in a hundred worship God in truth and without hypocrisy, for the greater part abuse his name. We see, at this day, how dishonest is the boasting of the Papists; for they think that the Church of God dwells among them, and they scorn us because we are few. When we say that the Church of God is to be known by the word and the pure administration of the sacraments, "Indeed," they say, "could God have forsaken so many people among whom the gospel has been preached?" They think that after Christ has been once made known, his grace remains fixed, and cannot by any means be taken away, whatever may be the impiety of men. Since then the Papists so shamefully lay claim to the name of Church, because they are many in number, it is no wonder that the Prophet, who had the same contest with the Jews and Israelites, had here expressly mentioned *a remnant;* as though he said, "In vain do the ungodly boast of God's name, since he regards them not as his people." The same truth we observe in Psalm xv., and in Psalm xxiv.; where the citizens of the Church are described; they are not those who pride themselves on external symbols, but who worship God with a sincere heart, and deal honestly with their neighbours; such dwell on the mountain of God. It was not a difficult thing for hypocrites to thrust themselves into the sanctuary, and to present there their sacrifices to God; but the Prophet shows that none are owned by God, but those who have a sincere heart and pure hands. So also in this place Joel says, that this Church indeed would be saved, but not the vast multitude,—who then? the remnant only.

But the clause which follows must be noticed, *Whom Jehovah shall call.* We have already seen that the Church of God consists often of a very small number; for God counts not any his children, but those who devote themselves sincerely and from the heart to his service, as Paul says, 'Who-

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soever calls on the name of God, let him depart from iniquity;' and many such are not found in the world.

But it is not enough to hold, that the Church of God is only in the remnant; it must be also added, that the remnant abide in God's Church for no other reason but that the Lord has called them. Whence then is it that there is a portion in the Church, which shall remain safe, while the whole world seems to be doomed to destruction? It is from the calling of God. And there is no doubt but that the Prophet means by the word, call, gratuitous election. The Lord is indeed often said to call men, when he invites them by the voice of his gospel; but there is what surpasses that, a hidden call, when God destines for himself those whom he purposes to save. There is then an inward call, which dwells in the secret counsel of God; and then follows the call, by which he makes us really the partakers of his adoption. Now the Prophet means, that those who will be the remnant shall not stand by their own power, but because they have been called from above, that is, elected. But that the election of God is not to be parated from the outward call, I allow; and yet this order ought to be maintained, that God, before he testifies his election to men, adopts them first to himself in his own secret counsel. The meaning is, that calling is here opposed to all human merits, and also to virtue and human efforts; as though he said, "Men attain not this for themselves, that they continue a remnant and are safe, when God visits the sins of the world; but they are preserved by his grace alone, because they have been chosen." Paul also speaks of the remnant in Rom. xi., and wisely considers that passage, 'I have kept for myself seven thousand.'

It is then God's peculiar province to keep those who fail not: and hence Paul says that they are the remnant of grace; for if God's mercy were taken away, there would be no remnant among the whole human race. All, we indeed know, are worthy of death, without any difference: it is therefore the election of God alone which makes the difference between some and others. Thus we see that the gratuitous goodness of God is extolled by the Prophet, when he says that a remnant shall be saved, who shall be called by the Lord: for it

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is not in the power of men to keep themselves unless they are elected; and the gratuitous goodness of God is the security as it were of their salvation. Now follows—

CHAPTER III.

1. For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,

2. I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people, and *for* my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.

3. And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.

1. Quia ecce, diebus illis et tempore illo, quo convertam captivitatem Jehudah et Jerusalem;

2. Et congregabo (tunc congregabo) omnes gentes, et descendere faciam in vallem Jesephat, et disceptabo illic cum ipsis super populo meo et super hæreditate mea Israel, quia disperserunt inter gentes et partiti sunt terram meam (*addemus et hunc etiam versum.*)

3. Et super populo meo jecerunt sortem et posuerunt, puerum pro scorto (*hoc est*, addixerunt pro scorto) et puellam vendiderunt pro vino ut biberent.

The Prophet confirms in these words what he had before taught respecting the restoration of the Church; for it was a thing difficult to be believed: when the body of the people was so mutilated, when their name was obliterated, when all power was abolished, when the worship of God also, together with the temple, was subverted, when there was no more any form of a kingdom, or even of any civil government,—who could have thought that God had any concern for a people in such a wretched condition? It is then no wonder that the Prophet speaks so much at large of the restoration of the Church; he did so, that he might more fully confirm what would have otherwise been incredible.

He therefore says, *Behold, in those days, and at that time, in which I shall restore the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I shall then make all Gentiles to come down into the valley of Jehoshaphat.* And the Prophet says this, because the Jews were then hated by all people, and were the execration and the dregs of the whole world. As many nations as were under

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heaven, so many were the enemies of the Jews. A fall then into despair was easy, when they saw the whole world incensed against them: "Though God may wish to redeem us, there are yet so many obstacles, that we must necessarily perish; not only the Assyrians are enraged against us, but we have found even greater hatred in our own neighbours." We, indeed, know that the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Tyrians, the Sidonians, the Idumeans, the Philistines, and, in short, all in the surrounding countries, were very hostile to the Jews. Seeing then every access to their land was closed up to the Jews, it was difficult to entertain any hope of deliverance, though God encouraged them. For this reason the Prophet now says, that God would be the judge of the whole world, and that it was in his purpose and power to call together all the Gentiles, as though he said, "Let not the number and variety of enemies frighten you: the Assyrians alone, I know, are not your enemies, but also all your neighbours; but when I undertake the defence of your cause, I shall be alone sufficient to protect you; and however much all people may oppose, they shall not prevail. Then believe that I shall be a sufficient defender, and shall deliver you from the hand of all the nations." We now perceive the Prophet's design when he declares, that God would come to *the valley of Jehoshaphat, and there call together all nations.*

But the Prophet says, *In those days, and at that time, when the Lord shall restore the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, &c.* This time the Jews limit to their return: they therefore think, that when liberty to return was granted them by Cyrus and Darius, what the Prophet declares here was then fulfilled; Christian doctors apply this prediction to the coming of Christ; but both interpret the words of the Prophet otherwise than the drift of the passage requires. The Prophet, no doubt, speaks here of the deliverance we have just noticed, and at the same time includes the kingdom of Christ; and this, as we have seen in other parts, is very commonly done. While then the prophets testify that God would be the redeemer of his people, and promise deliverance from Babylonian exile, they lead the faithful, as it were, by a continuous train or course, to the kingdom of

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Christ. For what else was the Jewish restoration, but a prelude of that true and real redemption, afterwards effected by Christ? The Prophet then does not speak only of the coming of Christ, or of the return of the Jews, but includes the whole of redemption, which was only begun when the Lord restored his people from the Babylonian exile; it will then go on from the first coming of Christ to the last day; as though he said, "When God will redeem his people, it will not be a short or momentary benefit, but he will continue his favour until he shall visit with punishment all the enemies of his Church." In a word, the Prophet here shows, that God will not be a half Redeemer, but will continue to work until he completes everything necessary for the happy state of his Church, and makes it in every respect perfect. This is the import of the whole.

We also see that the Prophet Haggai speaks in the same manner of the second temple,—that the glory of the second temple shall be greater than that of the first, (Hag. ii.) He, however, referred, no doubt, to the prophecy of Ezekiel; and Ezekiel speaks of the second temple, which was to be built after the return of the people from exile. Be it so, yet Ezekiel did not confine to four or five ages what he said of the second temple: on the contrary, he meant that the favour of God would be continued to the coming of Christ: so also Joel means here, when he says, *When God shall restore the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, he will then call together all the nations;* as though he said, "God will pour out not a small portion of grace, but will become the complete Redeemer of his people; and when the whole world shall rise against him, he will yet prevail; he will undertake the cause of his Church, and will secure the salvation of his people. Whosoever then will attempt to delay or hinder the restoration of the Church, shall by no means succeed; for the Lord, the defender of his people, will judge all nations."

Let us now see why the Prophet particularly mentions the *valley of Jehoshaphat.* Many think that valley to be intended, which was called the Valley of Blessing, where Jehoshaphat obtained a signal and a memorable victory, when yet he was not provided with large forces, and when many nations con-

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spired against him. Though Jehoshaphat fought against a large army with a few people, he yet wonderfully succeeded; and the people there presented thanks to God, and gave a name to the place. Hence, many think that this valley is mentioned, that the Prophet might remind the Jews how wonderfully they were saved; for their enemies had come for the very purpose of destroying the whole of God's people, and thought that this was wholly in their power. The memory then of this history must have animated the minds of the godly with a good hope; for God then undertook the cause of a small number against a vast multitude; yea, against many and powerful nations. And this view seems to me probable. Some place this valley of Jehoshaphat half way between the Mount of Olives and the city; but how probable their conjecture is I know not.

Unquestionably, with regard to this passage, their opinion, in my judgment, is the most correct, who think that there is here a recalling to mind of God's favour, which may in all ages encourage the faithful to entertain hope of their salvation. Some, however, prefer to take the word as an appellative; and no doubt יהושפט, *ieushaphath*, means the judgment of God; and so they render it, "The valley of the judgment of God." If this is approved I do not oppose. And, doubtless, though it be a proper name, and the Prophet speak here of that holy King, to encourage the Jews to follow his example, he yet alludes, no doubt, to the judgment of God, or to the contest which he would undertake for the sake of his people: for it immediately follows, ונשפטתי עמם שם, *uneshaphathti omem shim*, "And I will contend with them there:" and this verb is derived from שפט, *shephath*. Hence also, if it be the proper name of a place, and taken from that of the King, the Prophet here meant, that its etymology should be considered; as though he said, "God will call all nations to judgment, and for this end, that he may dwell in the midst of his people, and really testify and prove this."

Some apply this passage to the last judgment, but in too strained a manner. Hence also has arisen the figment, that the whole world shall be assembled in the valley of Jehoshaphat: but the world, we know, became infected with such

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delirious things, when the light of sound doctrine was extinguished; and no wonder, that the world should be fascinated with such gross comments, after it had so profaned the worship of God.[1]

But with respect to the intention of the Prophet, he, no doubt, mentions here the valley of Jehoshaphat, that the Jews might entertain the hope that God would be the guardian of their safety; for he says everywhere that he would dwell among them, as we have also seen in the last chapter, "And God will dwell in the midst of you." So also now he means the same, *I will assemble all nations, and make them to come down to the valley of* JEHOSHAPHAT; that is, though the land shall for a time be uncultivated and waste, yet the Lord will gather his people, and show that he is the judge of the whole world; he will raise a trophy in the land of Judah, which will be nobler than if the people had ever been safe and entire: for how much soever all nations may strive to destroy the remnant, as we know they did, though few remained; yet God will sit in the valley of Jehoshaphat, he will have there his own tribunal, that he may keep his people, and defend them from all injuries. At the same time, what I have before noticed must be borne in mind; for he names here the valley of Jehoshaphat rather than Jerusalem, because of the memorable deliverance they had there, when God discomfited so many people, when great armies were in an instant destroyed and without the aid of men. Since God then delivered his people at that time in an especial manner through his incredible power, it is no wonder that he records here the name of the valley of Jehoshaphat.

I will contend, he says, *with them there for my people, and for my heritage, Israel.* By these words the Prophet shows how precious to God is the salvation of his chosen people; for it is no ordinary thing for God to condescend to undertake their cause, as though he himself were offended and wronged; and God contends, because he would have all things in common

[1] "To this valley or glen, in which is the celebrated burying-place of the Jews, the Rabbins have appropriated the name, (the valley of Jehoshaphat,) and maintain, that in it the final judgment of the world is to be held;—a conceit in which they have been followed by many Christian writers, as well as by the Mohammedans."—*Dr Henderson.*

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with us. We now, then, see the reason of this contention,—even because God so regards the salvation of his people, that he deems himself wronged in their person; as it is said in another place, "He who toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye." And to confirm his doctrine still more, the Prophet adds, *For mine heritage, Israel.* God calls Israel here his heritage, to strengthen distressed minds, and also to comfort them; for if the Jews had only fixed their minds on their own state, they could not but think themselves unworthy of being regarded by God; for they were deemed abominable by all nations; and we also know that they were severely chastised for having departed from all godliness, and for having, as it were, wholly alienated themselves from God. Since, then, they were like a corrupted body, they could not but despond in their adversity: but the Prophet here comes to their assistance, and brings forward the word heritage, as though he said, "God will execute judgment for you, not that ye are worthy, but because he hath chosen you: for he will never forget the covenant which he made with your father Abraham." We see, then, the reason he mentions heritage: it was, that the Jews might not despair on account of their sins; and at the same time he commends, as before, the gratuitous mercy of God, as though he had said, "The reason for your redemption is no other, but that God has adopted to himself the posterity of Abraham, and designed them to be his peculiar people." What remains we must defer until to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou not only invitest us continually by the voice of thy Gospel to seek thee, but also offerest to us thy Son as our Mediator, through whom an access to thee is open, that we may find thee a propitious Father,—O grant, that, relying on thy kind invitation, we may, through life, exercise ourselves in prayer: and as so many evils disturb us on all sides, and so many wants distress and oppress us, may we be led more earnestly to call on thee, and, in the meantime, be never wearied in this exercise of prayer; that, being through life heard by thee, we may at length be gathered to thy eternal kingdom, where we shall enjoy that salvation which

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thou hast promised to us, and of which also thou daily testifiest to us by thy Gospel, and be for ever united to thy only begotten Son, of whom we are now members; that we may be partakers of all the blessings which he has obtained for us by his death. Amen.

Lecture Forty-seventh.

We said in our yesterday's Lecture, that God proves the singular love he has to his Church by condescending to undertake her cause, and contend as a worldly man would do for his paternal inheritance. He says, that *his heritage, Israel, had been dispersed among the nations;* as though he said, that it was an intolerable thing that enemies should, like robbers, thus divide his heritage. He speaks first of the people, then of the land; for God, as it is well known, consecrated the land to himself, and he would not have it occupied by profane nations. There was then a twofold sacrilege,—the people were carried away into distant lands,—and others were sent to inhabit and possess their land, which God had destined for his children and elect people.

There follows now another indignity still greater; for they cast lot on God's people,—*On my people they have cast lot, and prostituted a boy for a harlot, and a girl have they sold for wine, that they might drink.* By these words the Prophet enhances the injury done them; for the Jews had been reproachfully treated. Some measure of humanity is mostly shown when men are sold; but the Prophet here complains in the person of God, that the Jews had been exposed to sale, as though they were the offscourings of mankind, and of no account. They have cast lot, he says; and this was to show contempt; and the Prophet expresses more clearly what he meant, and says, that a *boy* had been *given for a harlot, and a girl for wine.* Some consider the Prophet as saying, that boys were prostituted to base and scandalous purposes; but I prefer another view,—that the enemies sold them for a mean price to gratify their gluttony, or their lust; as though the Prophet had said, that the Jews had to endure a grievous reproach

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by being set to sale, as they say, and that at the lowest price. He farther adds another kind of contempt; for whatever price the enemies procured by selling, they spent it either on harlots or on feasting. We hence see that a twofold injury is here mentioned,—the Jews had been so despised as not to be regarded as men, and had been sold not for the usual prices, but had been disposed of in contempt by their enemies almost for nothing;—and the other reproach was, that the price obtained for them was afterwards spent on gluttony and whoredom: yet this people was sacred to God. Now this contumelious treatment, the Prophet says, God would not endure, but would avenge such a wrong as if done to himself. This is then the meaning.

But the reason which induces me thus to interpret the Prophet is, because he says that a girl was sold for wine, as the boy for a harlot; and the construction of the Prophet's words is the same. It is indeed certain that in the latter clause the Prophet meant nothing else but that the price was wickedly spent for vile and shameful purposes; then the former clause must be understood in the same way. Let us proceed—

4. Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me a recompense? and if ye recompense me, swiftly *and* speedily will I return your recompense on your own head;

5. Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things:

6. The children also of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem, have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border.

4. Atque etiam, quid vobis mecum Tyre et Sidon, et cuncti termini Palestinæ? an mercedem vobis rependitis mihi? etsi confertis hoc in me, velox (subitò) rependam mercedem vestram in caput vestrum;

5. Quia argentum meum et aurum meum abstulistis, et desiderabilia mea bona transtulistis in templa vestra (*alii*, palatia.)

6. Et filios Jehudah et filios Jerusalem vendidistis filiis Græcorum, ut elongaretis eos à termino suo (*hoc est*, procul abduceretis eos à finibus suis.)

God expostulates here with Tyre and Sidon, and other neighbouring nations, and shows that they vexed his people without cause. Had they been provoked, some excuse might have been made; but since they made war of their own accord, the wrong was doubled. This is what God means by

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these words. *What have ye to do with me, O Tyre and Sidon?* He indeed continues the subject before explained: but he speaks of the concern here as his own; he seems not now to undertake the protection of his own people, but defends his own cause. "What have ye to do with me?" he says. God then interposes himself; as though he said, that the Tyrians and Sidonians were not only called by him to judgment because they had unjustly wronged his people, and brought many troubles on men deserving no such things; but he says also, that he stood up in his own defence. "What have I to do with you, O Tyrians and Sidonians?" as we say in French, *Qu'avons-nous à desmeller?* (what have we to decide?) Now the Prophet had this in view, that the Tyrians and Sidonians became voluntary enemies to the Jews, when they had no dispute with them; and this, as we have said, was less to be borne. "What then have ye to do with me, O Tyrians and Sidonians? Do I owe anything to you? Am I under any obligation to you? Do ye repay me my recompense?" that is, "Can you boast of any reason or just pretence for making war on my people?" He then means, that there had been no wrong done to the Tyrians and Sidonians, which they could now retaliate, but that they made an attack through their own wickedness, and were only impelled by avarice or cruelty thus to harass the miserable Jews: "Ye repay not," he says, "a recompense to me; for ye cannot pretend that any wrong has been done to you by me."

But if ye repay this to me, he says, *I will swiftly return the recompense on your head.* גמל, *gimel*, means not only to repay, as the Hebrew scholars ever render it, but also to confer, to bestow, (*conferre, ut loquuntur Latinè,*) as it has been stated in another place. 'What shall I repay to the Lord for all the things which he has recompensed to me?' This is the common version; but it is an improper and inconsistent mode of speaking. David no doubt refers to God's benefits; then it is, 'What shall I repay for all the benefits which the Lord has bestowed on me?' Then he who first does wrong, or bestows good, is said to recompense; and this is the sense in this place. 'If ye,' he says, 'thus deal with me, *swiftly*, מהרה, *mere*, suddenly, (for the word is to be taken as an

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adverb,) will I return recompense on your head;' that is, "Ye shall not be unpunished, since ye have acted so unjustly with me and my people." We now perceive the whole meaning of the Prophet: He enhances the crime of the Tyrians and Sidonians, because they wilfully distressed the Jews, and joined themselves to their foreign enemies, for the purpose of seizing on a part of the spoil. As, then, vicinity softened not their minds, their inhumanity was on this account more fully proved. But, as I have said, the Lord here places himself between the two parties, to intimate, that he performs his own proper office when he takes care of the safety of his Church.

He afterwards shows that this wickedness would not be unpunished—*If ye deal thus with me*, he says, *I shall swiftly* (suddenly) *return the recompense on your heads.* This passage contains a singular consolation; for God declares that whatever evils the faithful endure belong to him, and also that he will not suffer those under his protection and defence to be distressed with impunity, but will quickly return recompense on the heads of those who unjustly injure his heritage. We now understand the Prophet's design: he doubtless intended to support the minds of the godly with this thought,—that their afflictions are objects of concern with God, and that he will shortly be the avenger of them, however necessary it may be that they should for a time be thus violently and reproachfully treated by wicked men.

Let us now proceed: He says, that their *silver* and their *gold* had been *taken away* by the Tyrians and the Sidonians. All who were the neighbours of that people, no doubt, derived gain from their calamity, as is usually the case. They were at first ill disposed towards them; there was then a new temptation; they gaped after booty: and they showed themselves openly their enemies, when they saw that there was hope of gain. Such was the case with the Tyrians and Sidonians. There is no doubt, but that they sedulously courted the favour of the Assyrians, that they helped them with provisions and other things, that they might partake of the spoil. It was, therefore, no wonder that gold and silver was taken away by them, for the carriage of them [to Assyria] would have been

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tedious: and, as I have just hinted, it is usually the case, that conquerors gratify those by whom they have been assisted. Many extend this plunder generally to the whole wealth of the people; that is, that the enemies plundered what gold and silver there was in Judea, and that the Sidonians got a portion of it for themselves. But there seems to have been a special complaint, that the sacred vessels of the temple were taken away by the Tyrians and Sidonians: I therefore prefer to render the word, temples, rather than palaces. Some say, 'Ye have carried away my silver and my gold to your palaces.' Though the word is capable of two meanings, yet the Prophet, I have no doubt, refers here to the temples. The Tyrians, then, and the Sidonians profaned the silver and the gold of the temple by dedicating them to their idols; they adorned their idols with spoils taken from the only true God. This was the reason why God was so exceedingly displeased. There was, indeed, a cause why God, as we have said, contended for the whole nation of Israel: but it was a far more heinous wrong to spoil the temple, and to strip it of its ornaments, and then to adorn idols with its sacred vessels; for God was thus treated with scorn; and in contempt of him, the Tyrians and Sidonians built, as it were, a trophy of victory in their own dens, where they performed sacrilegious acts in worshipping fictitious gods.

Ye have taken away, he says, *my gold and silver, and my desirable good things*. God speaks here after the manner of men; for it is certain that even under the law he stood in no need of gold or silver, or of other precious things; he wished the temple to be adorned with vessels and other valuable furniture for the sake of the ignorant (*rudis*—rude) people; for the Jews could not have been preserved in pure and right worship, had not God assisted their weak faith by these helps, (*adminiculis*—props, aids.) But yet, as obedience is acceptable to him, he says that whatever was an ornament in the temple was a desirable thing to him; while, at the same time, by speaking thus, he put on, as I have said, a character not his own, as he has no need of such things, nor is he delighted with them. We ought not, indeed, to imagine God to be like a child, who takes delight in gold and silver and such things;

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but what is said here was intended for the benefit of the people, that they might know that God approved of that worship, for it was according to his command. He therefore calls every thing that was in the temple desirable, *Ye have*, he says, *carried away* into your temples *my desirable good things*.

It follows, *And the children of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem, have ye sold to the children of the Grecians*.[1] There is here another complaint subjoined,—that the Tyrians and Sidonians had been sacrilegious towards God, that they had cruelly treated God's afflicted people. In the last verse, God inveighed against the Tyrians and Sidonians for having prostituted to their idols gold and silver stolen from him; he now again returns to the Jews themselves, who, he says, had been sold to the children of the Grecians; that is, to people beyond the sea: for as Javan passed into Europe, he includes under that name the nations beyond the sea. And he says, that they sold the Jews to the Greeks, that they *might drive them far from their own borders*, so that there might be no hope of return. Here the cruelty of the Tyrians and Sidonians becomes more evident; for they took care to drive those wretched men far away, that no return to their country might be open to them, but that they might be wholly expatriated.

We now perceive what the Prophet had in view: He intended that the faithful, though trodden under foot by the nations, should yet have allayed their grief by some consolation, and know that they were not neglected by God; and that though he connived at their evils for a time, he would yet be their defender, and would contend for them as for his own heritage, because they had been so unjustly treated. He afterwards adds—

7. Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompense upon your own head.	7. Ecce ego excitabo eos è loco in quem vendidistis eos, et rependam mercedem vestram in caput vestrum.

The Prophet declares here more fully and expressly, that God had not so deserted the Jews, but that he intended, in

[1] לבני היונים, to the children of the Ivanites, or Javanites.—*Ed.*

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course of time, to stretch forth his hand to them again. It was indeed a temporary desertion: but it behoved the faithful in the meantime to rely on this assurance,—that God purposed again to restore his people: and of this the Prophet now speaks, *Behold,* he says, *I will raise them from the place unto which ye have sold them;* as though he said, "Neither distance of place, nor the intervening sea, will hinder me from restoring my people." As then the Tyrians and Sidonians thought that the Jews were precluded a return to their country, because they were taken away into distant parts of the world, God says that this would be no obstacle in his way to collect again his Church.

But it may be asked, When has this prediction been fulfilled? as we indeed know that the Jews have never returned to their own country: for shortly after their return from exile, they were in various ways diminished; and at length the most grievous calamities followed, which consumed the greatest part of the people. Since this then has been the condition of that nation, we ought to inquire whether Christ has collected the Jews, who had been far dispersed. We indeed know that they were then especially scattered; for the land of Judea never ceased to be distressed by continual wars until Jerusalem was destroyed, and the people were almost wholly consumed. Since then it has been so, when can we say that this prediction has been fulfilled? Many explain the words allegorically, and say, that the Prophet speaks of apostles and martyrs, who, through various persecutions, were driven into different parts; but this is a strained view. I therefore do not doubt, but that here he refers to a spiritual gathering: and it is certain that God, since the appearance of Christ, has joined together his Church by the bond of faith; for not only that people have united together in one, but also the Gentiles, who were before alienated from the Church, and had no intercourse with it, have been collected into one body. We hence see, that what the Prophet says has been spiritually fulfilled; even the *children of Judah and the children of Jerusalem* have been redeemed by the Lord, and restored again, not on foot or by sea; for Jerusalem has been built everywhere, as it is said in Zechariah.

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I will therefore gather them, he says; and he adds, *I will return recompense on your head.* He again confirms what he said before,—that though the ungodly should exult, while ruling over the children of God, their cruelty would not be unpunished; for they shall find that the Church is never neglected by God; though he may subject it to various troubles, and exercise its patience, and even chastise it, he will yet be ever its defender. It follows—

8. And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off; for the Lord hath spoken *it*.

8. Et vendam filios vestros et filias vestras in manum filiorum Jehudah, et vendent eos Sabæis, genti lonquinquæ, quia Jehovah loquutus est.

The Prophet describes here a wonderful change: the Tyrians and Sidonians did sell the Jews; but who is to be the seller now? God himself will take this office,—*I*, he says, *will sell your children;* as though he said, "The Jews shall subdue you and reduce you to bondage,"—by whose authority? "It shall be, as if they bought you at my hands." He means that this servitude would be legitimate; and thus he makes the Jews to be different from the Tyrians and Sidonians, who had been violent robbers, and unjustly seized on what was not their own: and hence the manner of the sale is thus described, —"I myself shall be the author of this change, and the thing shall be done by my authority, as if I had interposed my own name;" and the Jews themselves *shall sell*, he says, *your sons and your daughters to the Sabeans, a distant nation;* that is, the people of the East: for the Prophet, I doubt not, by mentioning a part for the whole, meant here to designate Eastern nations, such as the Persians and Medes; but he says, that the Tyrians and Sidonians shall be driven to the most distant countries; for the Sabeans were very far distant from the Phœnician Sea, and were known as being very nigh the Indians.[1]

[1] "This prophecy was fulfilled before and during the rule of the Maccabees, when the Jewish affairs were in so flourishing a state, and the Phœnician and Philistine powers were reduced by the Persian arms under Artaxerxes Mnemon, Darius Ochus, and especially Alexander and his successors. On the capture of Tyre by the Grecian monarch, 13,000

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But it may be asked here, When has God executed this judgment? for the Jews never possessed such power as to be able to subdue neighbouring nations, and to sell them at pleasure to unknown merchants. It would indeed be foolish and puerile to insist here on a literal fulfilment: at the same time, I do not say, that the Prophet speaks allegorically; for I am disposed to keep from allegories, as there is in them nothing sound nor solid: but I must yet say that there is a figurative language used here, when it is said, that the Tyrians and Sidonians shall be sold and driven here and there into distant countries, and that this shall be done for the sake of God's chosen people and his Church, as though the Jews were to be the sellers. When God says, "I will sell," it is not meant that he is to descend from heaven for the purpose of selling, but that he will execute judgment on them; and then the second clause,—that they shall be sold by the Jews, derives its meaning from the first; and this cannot be a common sale, as if the Jews were to receive a price and make a merchandise of them. But God declares that the Jews would be the sellers, because in this manner he signifies his vengeance for the wrong done to them; that is, by selling them *to the Sabeans, a distant nation.* We further know, that the changes which then followed were such, that God turned upside down nearly the whole world; for he drove the Tyrians and the Sidonians to the most distant countries. No one could have thought that this was done for the sake of the Jews, who were hated and abominated by all. But yet God declares, that he would do this from regard to his Church even sell the Tyrians and the Sidonians, though it was commonly unknown to men; for it was the hidden judgment of God. But the faithful who had been already taught that God would do this, were reminded by the event how precious to God is his heritage, since he avenges those wrongs, the memory of which had long before been buried. This then is the import of the whole. The Prophet now subjoins—

of the inhabitants were sold into slavery. When he took Gaza also, he put 10,000 of the citizens to death and sold the rest, with the women and children, for slaves."—*Dr Henderson.*

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9. Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up:

10. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I *am* strong.

11. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord.

9. Publicate hoc in Gentibus, sanctificate prœlium, excitate robustos, venient, ascendent omnes viri bellatores.

10. Concidite vomeres vestros in gladios et falces vestras in lanceas; debilis dicat, Ego sum robustus.

11. Congregamini et venite omnes gentes, congregamini in circuitu (*hoc est*, undique congregamini;) illic prosteruet Jehova fortes tuos.

Some think these words were announced, lest the people, being terrified by their evils, should become wholly dejected; and they elicit this meaning,—that God placed this dreadful spectacle of evils before their eyes, that the Jews might prepare and strengthen themselves for enduring them; that though nations should everywhere rise up, they might yet abide firm in the hope, that God would be the defender of his own Church. But the Prophet, I doubt not, continues the same discourse, and denounces war on the heathen nations, who had molested the Church with so many troubles; *Publish this*, he says, *among the nations, proclaim war, rouse the strong; let them come, let them ascend:* and we know how necessary it was by such means to confirm what he had previously said: for the ungodly are moved by no threats, nay, they laugh to scorn all God's judgments; while the faithful, yielding to their evils, can hardly raise up their minds, even though God promises to be a helper to them. Except, then, the matter had been set forth as painted before their eyes, they would not have experienced the power of consolation. Hence the lively representation we see here was intended for this end,—that the people, being led to view the whole event, might entertain hope of their future salvation, while they now saw God collecting his army, and mustering his forces to punish the enemies of his Church. The faithful, then, not only hearing by mere words that this would be, but also seeing, as it were, with their eyes what the Lord sets forth by a figure, and a lively representation, were more effectually impressed, and felt more assured, that God would become at length their deliverer.

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We now then see why the Prophet here bids war to be everywhere announced and proclaimed, and also why he bids the strong to assemble, and all warlike men to ascend; as though he said, "The Lord will not disappoint you with empty words, but will come provided with an army to save you. When ye hear, then, that he will be the author of your salvation, think also that all nations are in his power, and that the whole world can in a moment be roused up by his nod, so that all its forces may from all quarters come together, and all the power of the world meet in obedience to him. Know, then, that being provided with his forces, he comes not to you naked, nor feeds you with mere words, as they are wont to do who have no help to give but words only: this is not what God does; for he can even to-day execute what he has denounced; but he stays for the ripened time. In the meanwhile, give him his honour, and know that there is not wanting the means to protect you, if he wished; but he would have you for a time to be subject to the cross and to tribulations, that he may at length avenge the wrongs done to you."

It may be now asked, who are the nations meant by the Prophet? for he said before, that God would visit all nations with punishment, whereas, there was then no nation in the world friendly to the Jews. But in this there is nothing inconsistent; for God caused all the enemies of the Church to assail one another on every side, and to destroy themselves with mutual slaughters. Hence, when he designed to take vengeance on the Tyrians and Sidonians, he roused up the Persians and Medes; and when he purposed to punish the Persians and Medes, he called the Greeks into Asia; and he had before brought low the Assyrians. Thus he armed all nations, but each in its turn; and one after the other underwent the punishment they deserved. And so the expression of the Prophet must not be taken in a too restricted sense, as though the Lord would at the same time collect an army from the whole world, to punish the enemies of his Church; but that he rouses the whole world, so that some suffer punishment from others; and yet no enemy of the Church remains unpunished. We now perceive the Prophet's object, in saying,

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Publish this among the nations; that is, God will move dreadful tumults through the whole world, and will do this for the sake of his Church: for though he exposes his people to many miseries, he will yet have the remnant, as we have before seen, to be saved.

He afterwards adds, *Beat your plowshares into swords.* When Isaiah and Micah prophesied of the kingdom of Christ, they said, 'Beat your swords into pruninghooks, and your spears into plowshares,' (Isa. ii., Mic. iv.) This sentence is now inverted by Joel. The words of Isaiah and Micah were intended figuratively to show, that the world would be at peace when Christ reconciled men to God, and taught them to cultivate brotherly kindness. But the Prophet says here, that there would be turbulent commotions everywhere, so that there would be no use made of the plough or of the pruninghook; husbandmen would cease from their labour, the land would remain waste; for this is the case when a whole country is exposed to violence; no one dares go out, all desert their fields, cultivation is neglected. Hence the Prophet says, 'Turn your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears;' that is, field labour will cease, and all will strenuously apply themselves to war. And *let the weak say, I am strong,* for there will then be no exemption from war. Excuses, we know, availed formerly on the ground of age or disease, when soldiers were collected; and if any one could have pleaded disease, he was dismissed; but the Prophet says, that there will be no exemption then; "God," he says, "will excuse none, he will compel all to become warriors, he will even draw out all the sick from their beds; all will be constrained to put on arms." It hence appears how ardently the Lord loves his Church, since he spares no nations and no people, and exempts none from punishment; for all who have vexed the Church must necessarily receive their recompense. Since then God so severely punishes the enemies of his Church, he thereby gives a singular evidence of his paternal love to us.

At length he concludes, *There will Jehovah overthrow thy mighty ones.* Though the Prophet uses the singular number, *thy,* he no doubt refers to the whole earth; as though he said,

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"Whatever enemies there may be to my people, I will cut them down, however strong they may be." We now perceive that everything the Prophet has hitherto said has been for this end—to show, that God takes care of the safety of his Church, even in its heaviest afflictions, and that he will be the avenger of wrongs, after having for a time tried the patience of his people and chastised their faults—that there will be a turn in the state of things, so that the condition of the Church will be ever more desirable, even under its greatest evils, than of those whom the Lord bears with and indulges, and on whom he does not so quickly take vengeance.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are assailed on every side by enemies, and as not only the wicked according to the flesh are incensed against us, but Satan also musters his forces and contrives in various ways to ruin us,—O grant, that we being furnished with the courage thy Spirit bestows, may fight to the end under thy guidance, and never be wearied under any evils. And may we, at the same time, be humbled under thy mighty hand when it pleases thee to afflict us, and so sustain all our troubles, that with a courageous mind we may strive for that victory which thou promisest to us, and that having completed all our struggles, we may at length attain that blessed rest, which is reserved for us in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Forty-eighth.

12. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.

12. Expergefiant et ascendant gentes ad vallem Josaphat: quia illic sedebo ad judicandum omnes gentes ex circuitu.

THE Prophet proceeds with the same subject,—that God will at length become an avenger of the wrongs of his people, when they shall be unjustly harassed by profane men. We indeed know that God does not immediately succour his servants, but rests, as though he did not regard their troubles; but this he does to try their patience; and then at a suitable time he declares that he had not been indifferent, but

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had noticed the evils done to them, and deferred punishment until the wickedness of his enemies had been completed. So he says now, that God will at length be the defender of his people against all the nations assembled from every quarter in the valley of Jehoshaphat. Of this valley we have said enough already. But the chief thing is, that the afflictions of the Church shall not go unpunished; for God at the right time will ascend his tribunal, and cause all nations from every part of the earth to assemble and to be there judged. Now it follows—

13. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness *is* great.

13. Mittite falcem, quia maturuit messis: venite, descendite, quia plenum est torcular, refertæ sunt cuppæ, quia multiplicata est malitia ipsorum.

As God defers his judgments when miserable men groan under their burdens, the Prophet uses a form of speech, which represents God as not delaying, but, on the contrary, as hastening to judgment, though this be not perceived by carnal minds; for these two things well agree together—God waiting his opportunity as to the ungodly and suspending the punishment they deserve—and yet quickly accelerating their destruction; for he is said to defer with respect to men, because one day with us is like a hundred years; and he is said to hasten, because he knows the exact points of time. So he says in this place, *Put forth the sickle, for the harvest has ripened.* He uses metaphorical words, but he afterwards expresses without a figure what he means, and says, that *their wickedness had multiplied.*

But there are here two metaphors, the one taken from the harvest, and the other from the vintage. The Prophet calls those reapers who have been destined to execute his judgment; for God makes use as it were of the hired work of men, and employs their hands here and there as he wills. He afterwards adds another metaphor, taken from the vintage, *Full,* he says, *are the presses, and the vats overflow:* and at last he expresses what they mean,—that their wickedness had multiplied, that is, that it was overflowing. God said to Abraham, that the wickedness of the Canaanites was not then

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completed; and long was the space which he mentioned, for he said that after four hundred years he would take vengeance on the enemies of his people: that was a long time; and Abraham might have objected and said, "Why should God rest for so long a time?" The answer was this,—that their wickedness was not as yet completed. But the Prophet says here, that their wickedness had multiplied; he therefore gives to God's servants the hope of near vengeance, as when the harvest approaches and the vintage is nigh at hand; for then all have their minds refreshed with joy. Such is the Prophet's design; to encourage the faithful in their hope and expectation of a near deliverance, he declares that the iniquities of their enemies had now reached their full measure, so that God was now ready to execute on them his vengeance. This is the purport of the whole. It follows—

14. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord *is* near in the valley of decision.

14. Populi, populi in valle concisionis (*vel*, tribulæ,) quia propinquus dies Jehovæ in valle concisionis.

The Prophet confirms the same truth; but he multiplies words, because the devastation of the Church might have taken away all hope from God's servants; for who could have said that the Church could be restored, when it was so miserably wasted, yea, almost reduced to nothing? For the people were so scattered that the name of Israel was of no account. The people then had ceased to exist, for they had lost their name; in short, the constitution of the Church was dissolved, and all might have said, that the people were given up to thousand modes of destruction, as all execrated the name of Israel. Since it was so, whatever the Prophets said of the restoration of the people might certainly have seemed incredible. The repetition then is not superfluous, when the Prophet in various forms of words testifies and affirms that God would abide faithful, and that, though Israel should perish according to what men could see, yet God had power enough to vivify the people when dead: hence the Prophet speaks emphatically, *Nations! Nations!* for he assumes here the character of a herald, as indeed this office had been commit-

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ted to him, and shows that his predictions would not be fruitless, that he declared not words which would vanish into air, but that whatever he declared in God's name was full of power and energy. It might indeed have appeared ridiculous in the Prophet to summon all nations, since his doctrine was laughed to scorn, even at Jerusalem. How could his voice penetrate to the utmost borders of the world and be there heard? Though hidden then was the power of this prediction, it yet showed itself at last, and it was really made evident that the Prophet spoke not in vain.

Besides, he addresses the nations as though they could hear; but he raises thus his voice, and nobly triumphs over all the wicked for the sake of the godly, though the wicked then proudly ruled, and with high disdain: "They shall come," he says, "at length before God's tribunal, though they now tread the Church under foot; yea, the nations, the nations." He does not now mention the valley of Jehoshaphat, but of concision. חרוץ, *cheruts*, some take for a fixed decree; but the word means a sledge or an instrument for threshing. We know not the mode of threshing used by the Jews, but it is evident from several passages that חרוץ, *cheruts*, was an instrument with which they were wont to thresh; and I am inclined to adopt this sense; for the Prophet had first called God's judgment a harvest, then he compared it to presses. But if the word "concision" is more approved, I object not; at the same time, I do not doubt but that the Prophet alludes to threshing, as he ascribes to God his own office, that of scattering nations, who seem now to have conspired for the destruction of the Church. If any one considers it to mean a fixed decree, or a cutting off, as it means in Isaiah, I make no objection; for many give this interpretation. I have, however, explained what I most approve.

As to the drift of the subject, there is no ambiguity; the meaning of the Prophet is,—that God will so punish all the ungodly, that he will cut down and scatter them all, as when the corn is threshed on the floor.

At last he adds, that *nigh was the day of Jehovah in the valley of the sledge.* He intimates, that though God as yet connived at their wickedness, yet the day was coming on,

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unknown indeed to men, and that he would come at length to that valley, that is, that he would inflict such punishment as would prove that he was the protector of his people. Of this valley we have spoken already; and no doubt he has throughout a reference to it, otherwise he would not have used a suitable language, when he said, *Ascend into the valley.* But what is to ascend into the valley? for, on the contrary, he ought to have spoken of descending. But he compares Judea with other parts of the world; and it is, as it is well known, elevated in its situation. Then the higher situation of Judea well agrees with the ascent of which the Prophet speaks. But he ever means that God would so punish the nations as to make it evident that he did this in favour of his Church, as we shall soon see more clearly. But he says—

15. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.

15. Sol et luna obscurabuntur (*vel*, contrahent nigredinem,) et stellæ retrahent splendorem suum.

I have already explained this verse in chapter ii.: the Prophet, as we then stated, describes in these words the terrible judgment of God, in order to shake off the indifference of men, who carelessly hear and despise all threatenings, except the Lord storms their hearts. These figurative expressions then are intended to awaken the ungodly, and to make them know that it is a serious matter when the Lord proclaims his judgment. Let us now go on with the passage—

16. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord *will be* the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

16. Et Jehova è Sion rugiet, et è Jerusalem dabit (edat) vocem suam; et contremiscent cœli et terra: et Jehova spes erit populo suo, et fortitudo filiis Israel.

The Prophet explains here more clearly his object, or the end for which he had hitherto spoken of God's judgment; for what we have heard served only to spread terror: but now the Prophet shows that his purpose was to console the faithful, and to give some relief to their troubles and sorrows. This is the reason why he introduces God as roaring from

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Zion and crying from Jerusalem. Roaring is ascribed to God, inasmuch as he compares himself in another place to a lion, when representing himself as the faithful protector of the salvation of his people: "I will be," he says, "like the lion, who suffers not the prey to be taken from him, but boldly defends it with all the fierceness he possesses: so also will I do, I will not suffer my people to be taken from me." In this sense does the Prophet now say, that *God will roar from Zion.* God had been for a time despised; for the nations had prevailed against his chosen people, and plundered them at their pleasure; and God then exercised not his power. Since God had been for a time still, the Prophet says now, that he will not always conceal himself, but that he will undertake the defence of his people, and be like a lion; for he will rise up in dreadful violence against all his enemies.

And tremble, he says, *shall the heaven and the earth.* As almost the whole world was opposed to his elect people, the Prophet carefully dwells on this point, that nothing might hinder the faithful from looking for the redemption promised to them: "Though the heaven and the earth," he says, "raise opposition, God will yet prevail by his wonderful power. *Tremble,* he says, shall all the elements; what, then, will men do? Though they muster all their forces, and try all means, can they close up the way against the Lord, that he may not deliver his people?" We now understand the Prophet's design in speaking of the shaking of heaven and earth.

He at last adds, *God will be a hope to his people, and strength to the children of Israel.* In this part he gives a sufficient proof of what I have stated,—that he denounces extreme vengeance on the nations for the sake of his Church; for the Lord will at length pity his people, though they may seem to have perished before he succours them. However past hope then the people may be in their own estimation and in that of all others, yet God will again raise up the expectation of all the godly, who shall remain, and will inspire them with new courage. He speaks in general of the children of Israel; but what he says belongs only to the remnant,

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of which the Prophet had lately spoken; for not all, we know, who derive their origin from the fathers according to the flesh, were true Israelites. The Prophet refers here to the true Church; and hence Israel ought to be taken for the genuine and legitimate children of Abraham; as Christ, in the person of Nathanael, calls those true Israelites who imitated the faith of their father Abraham. I shall to-day finish this Prophet; I do not therefore dwell much on every sentence. It now follows—

17. So shall ye know that I *am* the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.

17. Et cognoscetis quòd ego sim Jehova Deus vester, habitans in Sion, monte sanctitatis meæ: et erit Jerusalem sanctitas, et alieni non transibunt per eam amplius.

This is a confirmation of the preceding doctrine, *ye shall know*, he says, that I am *your God*. The Prophet intimates that the favour of God had been so hidden during the afflictions of the people, that they could not but think that they were forsaken by God. His word ought indeed to be sufficient for us in the greatest evils; for though God may cast us into the deepest gulfs, yet when he shines upon us by his word, it ought to be a consolation abundantly available to sustain our souls. But yet, unless God really appears, we are confounded, and ask where is his power. For this reason the Prophet now says, that the faithful *shall* at length *know*, that is, really know him as their God.

There is a twofold knowledge,—the knowledge of faith, received from his word,—and the knowledge of experience, as we say, derived from actual enjoyment. The faithful ever acknowledge that salvation is laid up for them in God; but sometimes they stagger and suffer grievous torments in their minds, and are tossed here and there. However it may be with them, they certainly do not by actual enjoyment know God to be their Father. The Prophet therefore now treats of real knowledge, when he says, that they shall know that they have a God,—how are they to know this? By experience. Now this passage teaches us, that though God should not put forth his hand manifestly to help us, we ought yet to

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entertain good hope of his favour; for the Prophet spoke for this end,—that the godly might, before the event or the accomplishment of the prophecy should come, look to God and cast on him all their cares. Then the faithful, before they had real knowledge, knew God to be their Father, and hence hesitated not to flee to him, though what the Prophet testified had not yet been visibly accomplished.

Dwelling in Zion, the mountain of my holiness: This has been designedly added, that the faithful might know, that God made not a covenant in vain with Abraham, that mount Zion had not in vain been chosen, that they might there call on God; for we must have our attention called to the promises, otherwise all doctrine will become frigid. Now we know that all the promises have been founded on a covenant, that is, because God had adopted the people, and afterwards deposited his covenant in the hand of David, and then he designated mount Zion as his sanctuary. Since, then, all the promises flow from this fountain, it was necessary to call the attention of the Jews to the covenant: and this is the reason why the Prophet says now that God dwells in Zion; for otherwise this doctrine would no doubt only lead to superstition. God, indeed, we know, cannot be included within the circumference of any place, much less could he be confined to the narrow limits of the temple; but he dwelt on mount Zion on account of his own law, because he made a covenant with Abraham, and afterwards with David.

It then follows, *And Jerusalem shall be holiness, and aliens shall not pass through it any more.* While he declares that Jerusalem shall be holy, he exempts it at the same time from profanation. We know that it is a common mode of speaking in Scripture, and what often occurs, that God's heritage is holy, and also, that they profaned it. Hence, when the people were exposed as a prey to the pleasure of their enemies, the heritage of God became forsaken and polluted, profane men trod Jerusalem as it were under foot. But now the Prophet exempts the holy city from this pollution, as though he said, "The Lord will not allow his people to be thus miserably harassed, and will show that this city has been chosen by him, and that he has in it his dwelling.

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Aliens then *shall no more pass through it*—.Why? For it is first the holy city of God, and then, of his Church.

But as this promise extends to the whole kingdom of Christ, God doubtless makes here a general promise, that he will be the protector of his Church, that it may not be subject to the will of enemies; and yet we see that it often happens otherwise. But this ought to be imputed to our sins, for we make the breaches. God would, indeed, be a wall and a rampart to us, as it is said elsewhere, (Isa. xxvi.;) but we betray his Church by our sins. Hence aliens occupy a place in it: so we see at this day; for Antichrist, as it has been foretold, has now for ages exercised dominion in God's sanctuary. Since it is so, we ought to mourn at seeing God's holy Church profaned. Let us yet know, that God will take care to gather his elect, and to cleanse them from every pollution and defilement. It follows—

18. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim.

19. Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence *against* the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.

18. Et erit in die illa, stillabunt montes mustum, et colles decurrere facient lac; et omnes rivi Jehudah emittent aquas (*hoc est*, descendere facient,) et fons è domo Jehovæ egredietur et irrigabit vallem Sittim.

19. Ægyptus in solitudinem erit, et Edom in desertum solitudinis erit, propter vexationem filiorum Jehudah; quia fuderunt sanguinem innoxium (*vel*, purum) in terra sua (*vel*, ipsorum.)

The Prophet here declares that God will be so bountiful to his people, that no good things will be wanting to them either in abundance or variety. When God then shall restore his Church, it will abound, he says, in every kind of blessing: for this is the meaning of this language, *Distil new wine shall the mountains, and the hills shall make milk to run down; and all rivers also shall have abundant waters, and a fountain shall arise from the house of Judah to irrigate the valley of Shittim.* We now perceive the design of Joel. But we must remember that when the Prophets so splendidly extol the blessings of God, they intend not to fill the minds of the godly with

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thoughts about eating and drinking; but profane men lay hold on such passages, as though the Lord intended to gratify their appetite. We know, indeed, that God's children differ much from swine: hence God fills not the faithful with earthly things, for this would not be useful for their salvation. At the same time, he thus enlarges on his blessings, that we may know that no happiness shall in any way be wanting to us, when God shall be propitious to us. We hence see that our Prophet so speaks of God's earthly blessings, that he fills not the minds of the godly with these things, but desires to raise them above, as though he said, that the Israelites would in every way be happy, after having in the first place been reconciled to God. For whence came their miseries and distresses of every kind, but from their sins? Since, then, all troubles, all evils, are signs of God's wrath and alienation, it is no wonder that the Lord, when he declares that he will be propitious to them, adds also the proofs of his paternal love, as he does here: and we know that it was necessary for that rude people, while under the elements of the Law, to be thus instructed; for they could not as yet take solid food, as we know that the ancients under the Law were like children. But it is enough for us to understand the design of the Holy Spirit, namely, that God will satisfy his people with the abundance of all good things, as far as it will be for their benefit. Since God now calls us directly to heaven, and raises our minds to the spiritual life, what Paul says ought to be sufficient,—that to godliness is given the hope, not only of future life, but also of that which is present, (1 Tim. iv.;) for God will bless us on the earth, but it will be, as we have already observed, according to the measure of our infirmity.

The *valley of Shittim* was nigh the borders of the Moabites, as we learn from Num. xxv. and Jos. ii. Now when the Prophet says, that waters, flowing from the holy fountain, would irrigate the valley of Shittim, it is the same as though he said, that the blessing of God in Judea would be so abundant, as to diffuse itself far and wide, even to desert valleys.

But he afterwards joins, that the Egyptians and Idumeans would be sterile and dry in the midst of this great abundance of blessings, for they were professed enemies to the Church.

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Hence God in this verse declares that they shall not be partakers of his bounty; that though all Judea would be irrigated, though it would abound in honey, milk, and wine, yet these would remain barren and empty; *Mizraim*, then, *shall be a solitude, Edom shall be a desert of solitude.* Why? *Because of the troubles*, he says, *brought on the children of Judah.* God again confirms this truth, that he has such a concern for his Church, that he will avenge wrongs done to it. God, then, does not always come to our help when we are unjustly oppressed, though he has taken us under his protection; but he suffers us for a time to endure our evils; and yet the end will show, that we have been ever dear to him and precious in his sight. So he says now, that for the *harassments* which the Egyptians and Idumeans occasioned to the children of Judah, they shall be destitute, notwithstanding the abundance of all good things.

Because they shed, he says, *innocent blood in their* (or, in their own) *land.* If we refer this to Egypt and Idumea, the sense will be, that they had not protected fugitives, but, on the contrary, cruelly slew them, as though they had been sworn enemies. Many, we know, during times of distress, fled to Egypt and Idumea, to seek refuge there. As, then, the Egyptians had been so inhuman towards the distressed, the Prophet threatens them with vengeance. But I prefer to view what is said as having been done in Judea; *they have* then *shed innocent blood*, that is, in Judea itself. As God had consecrated this land to himself, to pollute it with unjust slaughters was a more atrocious crime. Forasmuch then as the Egyptians and Idumeans thus treated the Jews, and slew them in their own country in a base manner, though they were abiding quietly at home, it is no wonder that God declares, that he would be the avenger of these wrongs. It follows—

20. But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.	20. Et Jehudah in æternum habitabit (*alii passivè accipiunt*, habitabitur) et Jerusalem erit in generationem et generationem.

God here testifies that his redemption would not be for a short time, but that its fruit would be for a long period, yea,

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perpetual: for it would be but a small thing for the Church to be redeemed, except God kept it safe under his own power. This second thing the Prophet now adds,—that *Judah shall always remain* safe, and that *Jerusalem shall be* for a continued succession of ages. The ungodly, we know, sometimes flourish for a time, though before God they are already doomed to destruction. But the Prophet here declares, that the fruit of the redemption he promises will be eternal: for God is not led to deliver his Church only for a moment, but he will follow it with perpetual favour, and remain constant in his purpose and ever like himself; he is therefore the eternal and faithful protector of his people. The last verse follows—

21. For I will cleanse their blood *that* I have not cleansed: for the Lord dwelleth in Zion.

21. Et mundabo sanguinem eorum, non mundavi: et Jehova habitans in Sion.

The beginning of the verse is in various ways explained. Some make a stop after *cleanse* thus, "I will cleanse, yet their blood I will not cleanse;" as though God had said, that he would forgive heathen nations all their other wrongs, but could not forgive them the great cruelty they had exercised against his elect. So the sense would be, "Avarice may be borne, I could pass by robberies; but, since they slew my people, I am in this case wholly unforgiving." Hence, according to this view, God shows how precious to him is the life of his saints, inasmuch as he says, that he will not be pacified towards those ungodly men who have shed innocent blood. But this sense seems rather too forced. Others render thus, "Their blood will I cleanse, and will not cleanse," that is, "I will cleanse the Jews from their defilements, but I will not use extreme severity;" as he says also in Isaiah xlviii., 'I will not refine thee as gold or silver, for thou wouldest turn all into dross.' They hence think that God promises here such a cleansing of the Church, as that he would not use extreme rigour, but moderate his cleansing, as it is needful with regard to our defilements, of which we are all so full.

But this sense seems to me more simple,—that God would

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cleanse the blood which he had not cleansed; as though he said, "I have not hitherto cleansed the pollutions of my people; they are then become, as it were, putrid in their sins; but now I will begin to purify all their wickedness, that they may shine pure before me." There is a relative understood, as is often the case in Hebrew. But נקה, *neke*, is taken in Jer. xxx., in another sense,—that God will exterminate his Church: but we cannot in this place elicit any other meaning than that God will cleanse his Church from pollutions; for the Prophet, no doubt, means the defilements, of which the people were full. They will not, then, be able to enjoy the favour of God while lying in their filth. Now God, in promising to be a Redeemer, comes to the very fountain and the first thing,—that he will wash away their filth; for how could God be the Redeemer of the people, except he blotted out their sins? For as long as he imputes sins to us, he must necessarily be angry with us, we must be necessarily altogether alienated from him and deprived of his blessing. He then does not say in vain, that he will be a purifier; for when pollutions are cleansed, there follows another thing, which we have already noticed as to this future redemption, and with this—

He at last concludes and says, *And Jehovah shall dwell in Zion.* The Prophet recalls again the attention of the people to the covenant; as though he said, "God has willingly and bountifully promised all that has been mentioned, not because the people have deserved this, but because God has deigned long ago to adopt the children of Abraham, and has chosen mount Zion as his habitation." He shows, then, this to be the reason why God was now inclined to mercy, and would save a people, who had a hundred times destroyed themselves by their sins.

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PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we have, in this world, to fight continually, not only with one kind of enemies, but with numberless enemies, and not only with flesh and blood, but also with the devil, the prince of darkness,—O grant, that, being armed with thy power, we may persevere in this contest; and when thou afflictest us for our sins, may we learn to humble ourselves, and so submit to thy authority, that we may hope for the redemption promised to us; and though tokens of thy displeasure may often appear to us, may we yet ever raise up our minds by hope to heaven, and from thence look for thy only begotten Son, until, coming as the Judge of the world, he gathers us and brings us to the fruition of that blessed and eternal life, which he has obtained for us by his own blood. Amen.

END OF THE COMMENTARIES ON JOEL.

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THE

COMMENTARIES OF JOHN CALVIN

ON THE

PROPHET AMOS.

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COMMENTARIES

ON

THE PROPHET AMOS.

Lecture Forty-ninth.

He shows himself the time when he began to discharge his office of a teacher; but it does not appear how long he prophesied. The Jews, indeed, think that his course was long; he continued his office, as they write, under four kings. But he mentions here only the reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam. His purpose was to mark the time when he began to execute his office of a Prophet, but not to express how long he laboured for God in that office; and why he mentions only the beginning, we shall in its proper place notice. It is, indeed, certain, that he commenced his work under king Uzziah, and under king Jeroboam: and this also is to be noticed, that he was appointed a Prophet to the kingdom of Israel. For though he arose from the tribe of Judah, yet the Lord, as we shall see, set him over the kingdom of Israel. He sometimes turns his discourse to the tribe of Judah, but only, as it were, accidentally, and as occasion led him; for he mainly addressed the Ten Tribes. I now come to his words.

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CHAPTER I.

1. The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

1. Verba Amos, qui fuit inter pastores (*vel*, pecuarios) ex Tecua: quæ vidit super Israel diebus Uzziah regis Jehudah, et diebus Jarobeam filii Joas regis Israel, biennio ante motum (*vel*, χασμα) terræ.

Amos boasts not here, in speaking of his own words, that he adduced anything as from himself, but avows himself to be only the minister of God; for he immediately adds, that he received them by a vision. God himself raised up the Prophets, and employed their labour; and, at the same time, guided them by his Spirit, that they might not announce anything but what had been received from him, but faithfully deliver what had proceeded from him alone. These two things, then, well agree together,—that the prophecies which follow were the words of Amos, and that they were words revealed to him from above; for the word חזה, *chese*, which Amos uses, properly means, to see by revelation;[1] and these revelations were called prophecies.

But he says, that he *was among the shepherds of Tekoa*. This was a mean town, and had been shortly before surrounded by walls, and had ever been previously a village. He then mentions not his country, because it was celebrated, or as though he could derive thereby more authority or renown: but, on the contrary, he calls himself a Tekoan, because God drew him forth from an obscure place, that he might set him over the whole kingdom of Israel. They are therefore mistaken, as I

[1] There is an incongruity in our language in saying, "The words of Amos, which he *saw*." To see words, except when written, is no proper expression. To avoid this, *Newcome* has paraphrased the passage thus, —"Which came to him in a vision." There would be no necessity for this, had we a suitable term for "words," which in Hebrew has the same latitude of meaning with λογος in Greek. Dathius renders it, *Effata*, oracles. They were the things, the matters, the events, which the Prophet saw, or were discovered to him in a supernatural manner. The faculty of sight seems to have been used, because scenes were presented often to the prophets, when these communications were made to them; and then seeing became the term to designate these divine revelations, when nothing but messages, either of mercy or of judgment, were conveyed to the prophets.—*Ed.*

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think, who suppose that Amos was called one of the shepherds on account of his riches, and the number of his flocks; for when I weigh every thing, I see not how could this be. I indeed allow that נקדים, *nukodim*, are not only shepherds who do the work, but men possessing flocks, carrying on a large business; for the king of Moab is said to have been a נקד, *nukod*, and that he fed large flocks; but it was by hired shepherds. As to the Prophet, I do not see how this can be applied to him; for Tekoa was not a place famous for wealth; and as I have said, it was a small town, and of no opulence. I do not then doubt, but that Amos, by saying that he was a shepherd, pours contempt on the pride of the king of Israel, and of the whole people; for as they had not deigned to hear the Prophets of God, a keeper of sheep was sent to them.

It must be further noticed, that he is not called a shepherd of Tekoa, but *from Tekoa;* and interpreters have not observed this preposition. We shall see in chapter seven, that though Amos sprang from the tribe of Judah, he yet dwelt in the kingdom of Israel: for the priest, after he had slandered him before the king, bade him to go elsewhere, and to eat his own bread, and not to disturb the peace of the country. He therefore dwelt there as a stranger in a land not his own. Had he been rich, and possessing much wealth, he would have surely dwelt at home: why should he change his place? Since then it appears evident, that he was a sojourner in the land of Israel, he was, no doubt, one of the common people. So that his low condition (*ignobilitas*—ignobility) was intended for this purpose,—that God might thereby repress the arrogance of the king of Israel, and of the whole people; for we know how much inflated they were on account of the fruitfulness of their land and their riches. Hence Amos was set over them as a Prophet, being a shepherd, whom God had brought from the sheepfolds.

The time also is to be observed, when he is said to have seen these prophecies; it was *in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, two years before the earthquake, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash.* What the state of that time was, I described in explaining the prophecies of Hosea. Sacred history relates that the kingdom of Israel flourished under the second Jeroboam; for though he was an ungodly and wicked man, yet God spared

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then his people, and caused that not only the ten tribes should remain entire, but also that Jeroboam should enlarge his kingdom; for he had recovered some cities which had been lost. The state of the people was then tranquil, and their prosperity was such as filled them with pride, as it commonly happens. Uzziah also so reigned over the tribe of Judah, that nothing adverse prevailed there. Shortly after followed the earthquake. The time this earthquake happened, sacred history does not mention. But Josephus says, that it was when Uzziah seized on the priestly office, and was smitten with leprosy. He therefore makes that stroke of leprosy and the earthquake to be at the same time. But Amos, as well as other Prophets, spoke of it as a thing well known: thus Zechariah, after the people's return, refers to it in chapter xiv., 'There shall be to you a terror, such as was in the earthquake under king Uzziah.' He states not the year, but it was then commonly known.

Then the Prophet meant nothing more than to show by this event, that he denounced God's vengeance on the Israelites, when they were in prosperity, and were immersed, as it were, in their pleasures. And satiety, as it ever happens, made them ferocious; hence he was not well received; but his authority is hereby more confirmed to us; for he did not flatter the people in their prosperity, but severely reproved them; and he also predicted what could not be foreseen by human judgment, nay, what seemed to be altogether improbable. Had he not then been endued with the heavenly Spirit, he could not have foretold future calamities, when the Jews, as I have already said, as well as the Israelites, and others, promised themselves all kinds of prosperity; for God then spared the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah, nor did he execute his judgment on neighbouring nations.

We must now observe this also, that the words which he *saw* were *concerning Israel.* We hence learn, as I have already said, that the Prophet was specifically appointed for the Israelites, though born elsewhere. But how and on what occasion he migrated into the kingdom of Israel, we know not; and as to the subject in hand, it matters not much: but it is probable, as I have said before, that this was designedly done, that God might check the insolence of the people, who

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flattered themselves so much in their prosperity. Since, then, the Israelites had hitherto rejected God's servants, they were now constrained to hear a foreigner and a shepherd condemning them for their sins, and exercising the office of a judge: he who proclaims an impending destruction is a celestial herald. This being the case, we hence see that God had not in vain employed the ministry of this Prophet; for he is wont to choose the weak things of the world to confound the strong, (1 Cor. i. :) and he takes Prophets and teachers from the lowest grade to humble the dignity of the world, and puts the invaluable treasure of his doctrine in earthen vessels, that his power, as Paul teaches us, may be made more evident, (1 Cor. iv.)

But there was a special reason as to the Prophet Amos; for he was sent on purpose severely to reprove the ten tribes: and, as we shall see, he handled them with great asperity. For he was not polite, but proved that he had to do with those who were not to be treated as men, but as brute beasts; yea, worse in obstinacy than brute beasts; for there is some docility in oxen and cows, and especially in sheep, for they hear the voice of their shepherd, and follow where he leads them. The Israelites were all stubbornness, and wholly untameable. It was then necessary to set over them a teacher who would not treat them courteously, but exercise towards them his native rusticity. Let us now proceed; for of the kingdom of Uzziah and of Jeroboam the son of Joash, the second of that name, we have spoken on the first chapter of Hosea. It now follows—

2. And he said, The Lord will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither.

2. Et dixit, Jehova è Sion ruget, et è Jerusalem edet (*vel*, emittet) vocem suam; et lugebunt (*vel*, disperibunt) habitacula pastorum; et arescet (*vel*, pudefiet) vertex Carmeli.[1]

[1] Rendered literally from the Hebrew, this verse is a fine specimen of sublime simplicity: the poetical inversion of words is preserved:—

And he said,—
Jehovah from Zion will roar,
And from Jerusalem will he send forth his voice;
Then mourn will the habitations of shepherds,
And wither will the top of Carmel.

The roarings of lions are dreadful to shepherds. God's voice is either

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He employs here the same words which we explained yesterday in the last chapter of Joel; but for another purpose. By saying, 'Jehovah from Zion shall roar,' Joel intended to set forth the power of God, who had been for a time silent, as though he was not able to repel his enemies. As God was then despised by the ungodly, Joel declares that he had power, by which he could instantly break down and destroy all his enemies, and defend his Church and chosen people. But now Amos, as he addresses the Israelites, does here defend the pure worship of God from all contempt, and declares to the Israelites, that how much soever they wearied themselves in their superstitions, they still worshipped their own devices; for God repudiated all the religion they thought they had. There is, then, to be understood an implied or indirect contrast between mount Zion and the temples which the first Jeroboam built in Dan and Bethel. The Israelites imagined that they worshipped the God of their father Abraham; and there were in those places greater displays (*pompæ*—pomps) than at Jerusalem. But the Prophet Amos pours contempt on all these fictitious forms of worship; as though he said, "Ye indeed boast that the God of Abraham is honoured and worshipped by you; but ye are degenerate, ye are covenant-breakers, ye are perfidious towards God; he dwells not with you, for the sanctuaries, which you have made for yourselves, are nothing but brothels; God hath chosen no habitation for himself, except mount Zion; there is his perpetual rest: *Roar* then *will Jehovah from Zion.*"

We now see what the Prophet had in view: for he not only shows here, that God was the author of his doctrine, but at the same time distinguishes between the true God and the idols, which the first Jeroboam made, when by this artifice he intended to withdraw the ten tribes from the house of David, and wholly to alienate them from the tribe of Judah: it was then that he set up the calves in Dan and Bethel. The Prophet now shows that all these superstitions are condemned by the true God: *Jehovah* then *will roar from Zion, he will utter his voice from Jerusalem.* He no doubt wished here to terrify the

of mercy or of judgment; it is the latter here, and evidently that of drought, (*see* ch. iv. 6,) as the withering of Carmel was to be the effect. —*Ed.*

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Israelites, who thought they had peace with God. Since, then, they abused his long-suffering, Amos now says that they would find at length that he was not asleep. "When God then shall long bear with your iniquities, he will at last rise up for judgment."

By roaring is signified, as we said yesterday, the terrible voice of God; but the Prophet here speaks of God's voice, rather than of what are called actual judgments really executed, that the Israelites might learn that the examples of punishments which God executes in the world happen not by chance, or at random, but proceed from his threatenings; in short, the Prophet intimates that all punishments which God inflicts on the ungodly and the despisers of his word, are only the executions of what the Prophets proclaimed, in order that men, should there be any hope of their repentance, might anticipate the destruction which they hear to be nigh. The Prophet then commends here very highly the truth of what God teaches, by saying that it is not what vanishes, but what is accomplished; for when he destroys nations and kingdoms, it comes to pass according to prophecies: *God* then *shall utter his voice from Jerusalem.*

Then it follows, *And mourn shall the habitations of shepherds.* אבל, *abel*, means to mourn, and also to be laid waste, and to perish. Either sense will well suit this place. If we read, *mourn, &c.*, then we must render the following thus, *and ashamed shall be the head*, or top, *of Carmel.* But if we read, *perish, &c.*, then the verb בוש, *besh*, must be translated, *wither;* and as we know that there were rich pastures on Carmel, I prefer this second rendering: *wither* then *shall the top of Carmel;* and the first clause must be taken thus, *and perish shall the habitations of shepherds.*

As to what is intended, we understand the Prophet's meaning to be, that whatever was pleasant and valuable in the kingdom of Israel would now shortly perish, because God would *utter his voice from Zion.* The meaning then is this,— "Ye now lie secure, but God will soon, and even suddenly, put forth his power to destroy you; and this he will do, because he denounces on you destruction now by me, and will raise up other Prophets to be heralds of his vengeance: this

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will God execute by foreign and heathen nations; but yet your destruction will be according to these threatenings which ye now count as nothing. Ye indeed think them to be empty words; but God will at length show that what he declares will be fully accomplished."

With respect to *Carmel*, there were two mountains of this name; but as they were both very fertile, there is no need to take much trouble to inquire of which Carmel the Prophet speaks. Sufficient is what has been said,—that such a judgment is denounced on the kingdom of Israel as would consume all its fatness; for as we shall hereafter see, and the same thing has been already stated by the Prophet Hosea, there was great fertility as to pastures in that kingdom.

We must, at the same time, observe, that the Prophet, who was a shepherd, speaks according to his own character, and the manner of life which he followed. Another might have said, 'Mourn shall the whole country, tremble shall the palaces,' or something like this; but the Prophet speaks of mount Carmel, and of the habitations of shepherds, for he was a shepherd. His doctrine no doubt was despised, and many profane men probably said, "What! he thinks that he is still with his cows and with his sheep; he boasts that he is God's prophet, and yet he is ever engrossed by his stalls and his sheepfolds." It is then by no means improbable, but that he was thus derided by scornful men: but he purposely intended to blunt their petulancy, by mingling with what he said as a Prophet, those kinds of expressions which savoured of his occupation as a shepherd. Let us now proceed—

3. Thus saith the Lord, For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron:

3. Sic dixit Jehova, Super tribus sceleribus Damasci et super quatuor non ero propitius ei; quia triturarerunt serris (*vel*, tribulis ferreis) Gilead.

4. And I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, which shall devour the palaces of Ben-hadad.

4. Et mittam ignem in domum Chasael, et vorabit palatia Ben-Adad.

5. And I will break also the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the plain of

5. Et confringam vectem Damasci et excidam habitatorem ex Bikath-Aven (*vel*, ex planitie Aven, *vel*, molestiæ,

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Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden: and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith the Lord.

vel, doloris: *alii vertunt*, ex templo idoli) et tenentem sceptrum è domo Eden (*alii appellativè accipiunt*, è domo voluptatis;) et transferetur populus Syriæ Kirah (in Kir) dicit Jehova.

It is singular that Amos said that his words were concerning Israel, and that he should now turn to speak of Damascus and the country of Syria. This seems inconsistent; for why does he not perform the office committed to him? why does he not reprove the Israelites? why does he not threaten them? why does he not show their sins? and why does he speak of the destruction then nigh to the people of Syria? But it is right here to consider what his design was. He shows briefly, in the last verse, that ruin was nigh the Israelites; for God, who had hitherto spared them, was now resolved to ascend his tribunal. But now, that he might better prepare the Israelites, he shows that God, as a judge, would call all the neighbouring nations to an account. For had the Prophet threatened the Israelites only, they might have thought that what they suffered was by chance, when they saw the like things happening to their neighbours: "How is it credible that these evils and calamities have flowed from God's vengeance, since the Idumeans, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Tyrians, and the Sidonians, are implicated in these evils in common with ourselves? For if God's hand pursues us, it is the same with them: and if it is fate, that with blind force exercises its rule over the Moabites, the Idumeans, and the Tyrians, the same thing, doubtless, is to be thought of our case." Thus all the authority of the Prophet must have lost its power, except the Israelites were made to know that God is the judge of all nations.

We must also bear in mind, that the kingdom of Israel was laid waste, together with other neighbouring countries, as war had spread far and wide; for the Assyrian, like a violent storm, had extended through the whole of that part of the world. Not only, then, the Israelites were distressed by adversities at that time, but all the nations of which Amos prophesied. It was hence necessary to add the catalogue which we here find, that the Israelites might have as many

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confirmations respecting God's vengeance, as the examples which were presented to their eyes, in the dire calamities which everywhere prevailed. This is to be borne in mind. And then the Prophet regarded another thing: If the Idumeans, the Moabites, the Tyrians, and Ammonites, were to be treated so severely, and the Prophet had not connected the Israelites with them, they might have thought that they were to be exempted from the common punishment, because God would be propitious to them; for hypocrites ever harden themselves the more, whenever God spares them: "See, the Ammonites and the Moabites are punished; the Idumeans, the Tyrians, and other nations, are visited with judgment: God then is angry with all these; but we are his children, for he is indulgent to us." But the Prophet puts here the Israelites in the same bundle with the Moabites, the Idumeans, and other heathen nations; as though he said, "God will not spare your neighbours; but think not that ye shall be exempt from his vengeance, when they shall be led to punishment; I now declare to you that God will be the judge of you all together."

We now apprehend the design of the Prophet. He wished here to set before the eyes of the Israelites the punishment of others to awaken them, and also to induce them to examine themselves: for we often see, that those who are intractable and refractory in their disposition, when directly addressed, are not very attentive; but when they hear of the sins of others, and especially when they hear something of punishment, they will attend. The Prophet therefore designed by degrees to lead the Israelites to a teachable state of mind, for he knew them to be torpid in their indulgences, and also blinded by presumption, so that they could not be easily brought under the yoke: hence he sets before them the punishment which was soon to fall on neighbouring nations.

We must yet observe that there was another reason: I do not throw aside what I have already mentioned; but the Prophet no doubt had this also in view,—that God would punish the Syrians, because they cruelly raged against the Israelites, especially against Gilead and its inhabitants. As God, then, would inflict so grievous a punishment on the Syrians, be-

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cause they so cruelly treated the inhabitants of Gilead, what was to be expected by the Israelites themselves, who had been insolent towards God, who had violated his worship who had robbed him of his honour, who had in their turn destroyed one another! For, as we shall hereafter see, there was among them no equity, no humanity; they had forgotten all reason. Since, then, the Israelites were such, how could they hope that so many and so detestable crimes should go unpunished, when they saw that the Syrians, though uncircumcised, were not to be spared, because they so cruelly treated professed enemies, on whom they lawfully made war?

I now come to the words of the Prophet: *Thus saith Jehovah, For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not be propitious to it;* literally, *I will not convert it*:[1] but I take this actively, that God would not turn himself to mercy, or that he would not be propitious to Damascus. We know that Damascus was the capital of Syria; and the Prophet here, by mentioning a part for the whole, threatens the whole people, and summons all the Syrians to God's tribunal, because they had inhumanely treated, as we shall see, the city of Gilead. But he says, God *will not be propitious for three and four transgressions of Damascus.* Some take this meaning, "For three transgressions I have been propitious, for four I will not be." But there is no need of adding anything to the Prophet's words; for the most suitable sense here is, that for

[1] Eam non restituam—'I will not restore it.'—*Bishop Lowth.* Of all commentators, Dathius gives the best explanation of the first part of this verse. His remarks are these:—"There is here mentioned a *fourth* sin, for which God would no longer defer punishment. Then the *three* sins, which had preceded the fourth, signify all those sins which they had besides committed, a definite number being put for a number indefinite." But as to the phrase, לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ, non avertam illud—'I will not turn it away,' so as to forgive it, that is, the fourth sin, he seems not to have been so felicitous; for the reference is evidently to Damascus. It will admit of either these renderings,—"I will not restore it," that is, to favour; or, "I will not turn away from it," so as to let it go unpunished. The whole verse I would render thus:—

Thus saith Jehova,—
For three transgressions of Damascus,
Yea, for the fourth, I will not turn away from it;
For it threshed Gilead with iron wains.

Literally it is, "*they* threshed;" for it is usual with the Prophets, when speaking of a city or people, to pass from the singular to the plural number.—*Ed.*

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the many sins of Damascus God would not be propitious to it: and the Prophet, I have no doubt, intended by the two numbers to set forth the irreclaimable perverseness of the Syrians. Seven in Scripture is an indefinite number, and is taken, as it is well known, to express what is countless. By saying then, *three and four transgressions*, it is the same as if he had said, seven: but the Prophet more strikingly intimates the progress the Syrians made in their transgressions, until they became so perverse, that there was no hope of repentance. This then is the reason, that God declares that he would no more forgive the Syrians, inasmuch as without measure or limit they burst forth into transgressions and ceased not, though a time for change was given them. This is the true meaning. And the Prophet repeats the same form of speech in speaking of Gaza, of Ammon, of Edom, and of other nations.

Let us learn from this place, that God, whom the world regards as too cruel, when he takes vengeance on sins, shows really and by sure proof the truth of what he declares so often of himself in Scripture, and that is, that he bears long and does not quickly take vengeance: though men are worthy to perish, yet the Lord suspends his judgments. We have a remarkable proof of this in these prophecies; for the Prophet speaks not only of one people but of many. Hence God endured many transgressions not only in the Syrians, but also in other nations: there was not then a country in which a testimony to God's forbearance did not exist. It hence appears, that the world unjustly complains of too much rigour, when God takes vengeance, for he ever waits till iniquity, as it was stated yesterday, reaches its highest point.

There is besides presented to us here a dreadful spectacle of sins, among so many nations. At the same time, when we compare that age with ours, it is certain that greater integrity existed then: all kinds of evils so overflow at this day, that compared with the present, the time of Amos was the golden age; and yet we hear him declaring here, that the people of Judah and of Israel, and all the other nations, were monstrously wicked, so that God could not bring them to repentance. For he testifies not here in vain, that he would

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punish wickedness wholly obstinate, since they had not turned to him, who had advanced to the number seven; that is, who had sinned, as it has been before stated, without measure or limits: and this ought also to be noticed in the Prophet's words; but I cannot now proceed farther.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou seest us to be of a disposition so hard and rebellious, that we are not, without great difficulty, drawn to thee,—O grant, that we may at least be subdued by the threatenings thou daily denouncest on us, and be so subdued, that being also drawn by thy word, we may give up ourselves to thee, and not only suffer ourselves to be constrained by punishments and corrections, but also obey thee with a willing mind, and most readily offer ourselves to thee as a sacrifice of obedience, so that being ruled by the Spirit of thy Son, we may at length attain that blessed rest, which has been prepared for us by the same thy Son our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Fiftieth.

We explained in yesterday's Lecture, that what the Prophet means by the three and four transgressions of Damascus, is perverse and incurable wickedness; for God here declares that he had borne long enough with the sins of Damascus, and that now he is in a manner forced to proceed to extreme rigour, seeing that there was no hope of amendment. But what follows may seem strange; for immediately the Prophet subjoins, *Because they have threshed Gilead with iron wains*, or serrated machines. He records here only one wickedness: where, then, were the seven of which he spoke? The answer may be easily given. By naming the three and four sins of Damascus, he means not different kinds of sins, but rather the perverseness which we have mentioned; for they had been extremely rebellious against God, and God had suspended his vengeance, till it became evident that they were unhealable. It was, therefore, not necessary to mention here seven different sins; for it was enough that Damascus,

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which means the kingdom of Syria, was held bound by such a degree of obstinacy, that no remedy could be applied to its transgressions; for it had for a long time tried the patience of God.

Now the Prophet subjoins, *I will send fire into the house of Hazael, which will devour the palaces of Ben-hadad.* The Prophet speaks still of the kingdom of Syria; for we know that both Ben-hadad and Hazael were kings of Syria. But Jerome is much mistaken, who thinks that Ben-hadad was here put in the second place, as if he had been the successor of Hazael,[1] while sacred history relates that Hazael came to Elisha when Ben-hadad was ill in his bed, (2 Kings viii. 9;) and he was sent to request an answer. Now the Prophet declared that Hazael would be the king of Syria, and declared this not without tears; for he pitied his own people, of which this Syrian would be the destroyer. After he returned home, he strangled Ben-hadad, and took to himself the royal dignity. But it is common enough in Scripture to speak of a thing present, and then, as in this place, to add what has past, *I will send fire into the house of Hazael, and* this fire *will devour the palaces of Ben-hadad;* as though he said, "I will destroy the kingdom of Syria, I will consume it as with burning." But he first names the house of Hazael, and then the palaces of Ben-hadad; as though he said, "No ancientness shall preserve that kingdom from being destroyed." For, metaphorically, under the word fire, he designates every kind of consumption; and we know how great is the violence of fire. It is then as though he said, that no wealth, no strength, no fortifications, would stand in the way to prevent the kingdom of Syria from being destroyed.

He then adds, *I will break in pieces the bar of Damascus.* The Prophet confirms what he had already said; for Damascus, being strongly fortified, might have seemed unassailable. By bar, the Prophet, mentioning a part for the whole, meant

[1] There were two Ben-hadads: the one whom Hazael strangled, 2 Kings viii. 15; and his son who succeeded him, 2 Kings xiii. 3. But Ben-hadad seems to have been the name of many of the kings of Syria, as Pharaoh was the common name of the kings of Egypt. Hence *the palaces of Ben-ha-dad* were probably those built by several kings of that name.—*Ed.*

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strongholds and everything which could keep out enemies. Nothing, then, shall prevent enemies from taking possession of the city of Damascus. How so? Because the Lord will break in pieces its bars.

It is then added, *I will cut off*, or destroy, *the inhabitant from Bikoth Aven*, or from the plain of Aven. It is uncertain whether this was the proper name of a place or not, though this is probable; and yet it means a plain, derived from a verb, which signifies to cut into two, or divide, because a plain or a valley divides or separates mountains; hence a valley or plain is called in Hebrew a division. Now, we know that there were most delightful plains in the kingdom of Syria, and even near Damascus. *Aven* also may have been the name of a place, though it means in Hebrew *trouble* or *labour*. But whatever it may have been, the Prophet no doubt declares here, that all the plains nigh Damascus, and in the kingdom of Syria, would be deprived of their inhabitants. *I will* then *destroy the inhabitant from the plain of Aven, and the holder of the sceptre from the house of Eden*, or from the house of pleasure. This also may have been the name of a place, and from its situation a region, which, by its pleasantness, greatly delighted its inhabitants. But the Prophet, I have no doubt, alludes, in these two words, to *trouble* and *pleasure*. *Removed*, he says, *shall be the people of Syria into Kir*. The purport of this is, that the kingdom of Syria would be wasted, so that the people would be taken into Assyria; for the Prophet declares that the Assyrians would be the conquerors, and remove the spoils into their own kingdom, and lead away the people as captives; for the word city, as a part for the whole, is put here for the whole land. It now follows—

6. Thus saith the Lord, For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they carried away captive the whole captivity, to deliver *them* up to Edom:

7. But I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, which shall devour the palaces thereof:

6. Sic dicit Jehova, Super tribus sceleribus Gazæ et super quatuor, non ero propitius ei, quia transtulerunt captivitatem perfectam, ut concluderent in Edom:

7. Et mittam ignem in murum Gazæ, qui devorabit palatia ejus:

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8. And I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, and him that holdeth the sceptre from Ashkelon, and I will turn mine hand against Ekron: and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord God.

8. Et excidam habitatorem de Azoto et tenentem sceptrum de Ascalon; et convertam (*vel*, reducam) manum meam super Ekron, et peribunt reliquiæ Philistinorum, dicit Dominus Jehova.

Amos directs here his discourse against Gaza, which the Philistines occupied. It was situated in the tribe of Judah, towards the sea; but as the Anakims were its inhabitants, the Philistines kept possession of it. Then the Jews had these enemies as ακτωρηκους, (*guardians of the shore*,) who had a greater opportunity of doing harm from being so near: and we may learn from the Prophet's words, that the Philistines, who dwelt at Gaza, when they saw the Israelites oppressed by their enemies, joined their forces to foreign allies, and that the Jews did the same. God then now denounces punishment on them.

As to the word, Gaza, some think that it was given to the city, because Cambyses, when warring with the Egyptians, had deposited there his money and valuable furniture; and because the Persians call a treasure, *gaza*; but this is frivolous. We indeed know that the Greek translators ever put γ, (*gamma*,) for ע, (*oin*;) as of Omorrha they make Gomorrha, so of Oza they make Gaza. Besides, the city had this name before the time of Cambyses. It was then more probably thus called from its strength: and that the Greeks rendered it Gaza, was according to their usual practice, as I have said, as to other words. But there were two Gazas; when the first was demolished, the inhabitants built another near the sea. Hence Luke, in the 8th chapter of the Acts, says, that Gaza was a desert; and he thus makes a difference between Gaza on the sea-side and the old one, which had been previously demolished. But Amos speaks of the first Gaza; for he threatens to it that destruction, through which it happened that the city was removed to the shores of the Mediterranean.

I come now to the Prophet's words: God, he says, *will not be propitious to Gaza for three and four transgressions*, as the Philistines had so provoked God, that they were now wholly unworthy of pardon and mercy. I reminded you in yesterday's Lecture, that there is presented to us here a sad

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spectacle, but yet useful; for we here see so many people in such a corrupted state, that their wickedness was become to God intolerable: but at this day the state of things in the world is more corrupt, for iniquity overflows like a deluge. Whatever then men may think of their evils, the Lord from heaven sees how great and how irreclaimable is their obstinacy. It is nothing that some throw blame on others, or look for some alleviation, since all are ungodly and wicked: for we see that God here declares that he would, at the same time, take vengeance on many nations. The Idumeans might then have objected, and said, that their neighbours were nothing better; others might have made the same excuse; every one might have had his defence ready, if such a pretext availed, that all were alike implicated in the same guilt and wickedness. But we see that God appears here as a judge against all nations. Let us not then be deceived by vain delusions, when we see that others are like us; let every one know that he must bear his own burden before God: *I will not* then *be propitious for three and for four transgressions.*

Because they carried away, he says, *a complete captivity.* The Prophet records here a special crime,—that the Gazites took away Jews and Israelites, and removed them as captives into Idumea, and confined them there. I have already said that it was not the Prophet's design to enumerate all their sins, but that he was content to mention one crime, that the Israelites might understand that they were involved in a heavier guilt, because they had grievously offended both God and men. If then so severe a vengeance was to be taken on Gaza, they ought to have known, that a heavier vengeance awaited them, because they were guilty of more and greater sins. But he says that they had effected a complete captivity, inasmuch as they had spared neither women, nor children, nor old men; for *captivity* is called *perfect* or complete, when no distinction is made, but when all are taken away indiscriminately, without any selection. They then carried away a complete captivity, so that no pity either for sex or for age touched them: *that they might shut* them *up,* he says, *in Edom.*

Now follows a denunciation of punishment,—that *God*

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would send a fire on the wall of Gaza, to devour its palaces. And it hence appears that Gaza was a splendid town, and sumptuously built; and for this reason the Prophet speaks of its palaces. He shows, at the same time, that neither strength nor wealth would prevent God from executing the punishment which the Gazites deserved. He names also other cities of Palestine, even *Ascalon* and *Azdod*, or *Azotus*, and *Ecron*. These cities the Philistines then possessed. The Prophet then intimates, that wheresoever they might flee, there would be no safe place for them; for the Lord would expose as a prey to enemies, not only Gaza, but also all the other cities. We may conclude that Ascalon was the first city; for there was the royal residence, though Gaza was the capital of the whole nation; it might yet be that the pleasantness of its situation, and other attractions, might have induced the king to reside there, though it was not the metropolis; *Him* then *who holds the sceptre I will cut off from Ascalon.* He at last concludes, that all the remnants of Palestine would be destroyed. Now, whenever God denounces destruction on the Jews, he ever gives some hope, and says that the remnant would be saved: but here the Prophet declares that whatever remained of that nation would be destroyed; for God purposed to destroy them altogether, and also their very name.

He therefore adds, that *Jehovah Lord* had spoken, *saith the Lord Jehovah.* This was added for confirmation; for the Philistines were then in possession of many and strong defences, so that they boldly laughed to scorn the threatenings of the Prophet. He therefore brings forward here the name of God. Now follows the prediction respecting Tyrus:—

9. Thus saith the Lord: For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant:

10. But I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus, which shall devour the palaces thereof.

9. Sic dicit Jehova, Super tribus sceleribus Tyri et super quatuor non ero ei propitius, quia concluserunt captivitatem perfectam in Edom, et non recordati sunt fœderis fratrum:

10. Et mittam ignem in murum Tyri, qui comedet palatia ejus.

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He uses nearly the same words respecting Tyrus which he did respecting Gaza, and charges it with the same sin, which was that of removing the Jews from their country, as refugees and exiles, into Idumea, and of selling them as captives to the Idumeans. As of all the rest, so he declares the same of Tyrus,—that they had not lightly sinned, and that therefore no moderate chastisement was sufficient; for they had for a long time abused God's forbearance, and had become stubborn in their wickedness.

But what he says, that *they had not been mindful of the covenant of brethren*, some refer to Hiram and David; for we know that they had a brotherly intercourse, and called each other by the name of brothers; so great was the kindness between them. Some then think that the Tyrians are here condemned for having forgotten this covenant; for there ought to have remained among them some regard for the friendship which had existed between the two kings. But I know not whether this is too strained a view: I rather incline to another, and that is, that the Tyrians delivered up the Jews and the Israelites to the Idumeans, when yet they knew them to be brethren: and they who implicate themselves in a matter of this kind are by no means excusable. When I see one conspiring for the ruin of his own brother, I see a detestable and a monstrous thing; if I abhor not a participation in the same crime, I am involved in the same guilt. When therefore the Tyrians saw the Idumeans raging cruelly against their brethren, for they were descended from the same family, they ought doubtless to have shown to the Idumeans how alienated they were from all humanity, and how perfidious they were against their own brethren and relatives. Now the Prophet says, that they *had been unmindful of the covenant of brethren*, because they made themselves assistants in so great and execrable a crime as that of carrying away Jews into Idumea, and of shutting them up there, when they knew that the Idumeans sought nothing else but the entire ruin of their own brethren. This seems to be the real meaning of the Prophet.

But he adds, that *God would send a fire on the wall of Tyrus, to consume its palaces*. When this happened, cannot with

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certainty be known: for though Tyrus was demolished by Alexander, as Gaza also was, these cities, I doubt not, suffered this calamity long before the coming of Alexander of Macedon; and it is probable, as I have already reminded you, that the Assyrians laid waste these countries, and also took possession of Tyrus, though they did not demolish that city; for in Alexander's time there was no king there, it had been changed into a republic; the people were free, and had the chief authority. There must then have been there no small changes, for the state of the city and its government were wholly different from what they had been. We may then conclude that Tyrus was laid waste by the Assyrians, but afterwards recovered strength, and was a free city in the time of Alexander the Great. Let us now proceed: for I dwell not on every word, as we see that the same expressions are repeated by the Prophet.

11. Thus saith the Lord, For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever:

11. Sic dicit Jehova, Super tribus sceleribus Edom et super quatuor non ero ei propitius, quia persequutus est gladio fratrem suum, et violavit misericordias suas, et diripuit in seculum ira ejus, et indignationem servavit perpetuò:

12. But I will send a fire upon Teman, which will devour the palaces of Bozrah.

12. Et mittam ignem in Theman, qui comedet palatia Bozrah.

The Prophet now passes to the Idumeans themselves. He had denounced ruin on the uncircumcised nations, who delivered up the Jews into their hands: but they deserved a much heavier punishment, because their crime was much more atrocious. The Idumeans derived their origin, as it is well known, from their common father Isaac, and bore the same symbol of God's covenant, for they were circumcised. Since nearness of blood, and that sacred union, could not make them gentle to the Jews, we hence perceive how brutal was their inhumanity. They were then unworthy of being forgiven by God, when he became so severe a judge against heathen nations. But the Prophet says now, that the Idumeans had sinned more than their neighbours, and that

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their obstinacy was unhealable, and that hence they could no longer be borne, for they had too long abused God's forbearance, who had withheld his vengeance until this time.

He charges them with this crime, that *they pursued their brother with the sword.* There is here an anomaly of the number, for he speaks of the whole people. Edom then pursued his brother, that is, the Jews. But the Prophet has intentionally put the singular number to enhance their crime: for he has placed here, as it were, two men, Edom and Jacob, who were really brothers, and even twins. Was it not then a most execrable ferocity in Edom to pursue his own brother Jacob? He then sets before us here two nations as two men, that he might more fully exhibit the barbarity of the Idumeans in forgetting their kindred, and in venting their rage against their own blood. *They have* then *pursued their brother with the sword;* that is, they have been avowed enemies, for they had joined themselves to heathen nations. When the Assyrians came against the Israelites, the Idumeans put on arms: and this, perhaps, happened before that war; for when the Syrians and Israelites conspired against the Jews, it is probable that the Idumeans joined in the same alliance. However this may have been, the Prophet reproaches them with cruelty for arming themselves against their own kindred, without any regard for their own blood.

He afterwards adds, *They have destroyed their own compassions;* some render the words, "their own bowels;" and others in a strained and improper manner transfer the relative to the sons of Jacob, as though the Prophet had said, that Edom had destroyed the compassions, which were due, on account of their near relationship, from the posterity of Jacob. But the sense of the Prophet is clearly this,—that they destroyed their own compassions, which means, that they put off all sense of religion, and cast aside the first affections of nature. He then calls those the compassions of Edom, even such as he ought to have been influenced by: but as he had thrown aside all regard for humanity, there was not in him that compassion which he ought to have had.

He then adds, *His anger hath perpetually raged.* He now compares the cruelty of the Idumeans to that of wild beasts;

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for they raged like fierce wild animals, and spared not their own blood. They then raged perpetually, even endlessly, and *retained their indignation perpetually*. The Prophet seems here to allude to Edom or Esau, the father of the nation; for he cherished long, we know, his wrath against his brother; as he dared not to kill his brother during his father's life. Hence he said, I will wait till my father's death, then I will avenge myself, (Gen. xxvii. 41.) Since Esau then nourished this cruel hatred against his brother Jacob, the Prophet here charges his posterity with the same crime; as though he had said, that they were too much like their father, or too much retained his perverse disposition, as they cherished and ever retained revenge in their hearts, and were wholly implacable. There may have been other causes of hatred between the Idumeans and the posterity of Jacob: but they ought, notwithstanding, whatever displeasure there may have been, to have forgiven their brethren. It was a monstrous thing past endurance, when a regard for their own blood did not reconcile those who were, by sacred bonds, connected together. We now perceive the object of the Prophet: and we here learn, that the Idumeans were more severely condemned than those mentioned before, and for this reason,—because they raged so cruelly against their own kindred.

He says, in the last place, *I will send fire on Teman, to consume the palaces of Bozrah*. By fire he ever means any kind of destruction. But he compares God's vengeance to a burning fire. We know that when fire has once taken hold, not only on a house, but on a whole city, there is no remedy. So now the Prophet says, that God's vengeance would be dreadful, that it would consume whatever hatred there was among them: *I will* then send fire on Teman; which, as it is well known, was the first city of Idumea. Let us now proceed—

13. Thus saith the Lord, For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border:

14. But I will kindle a fire in the

13. Sic dicit Jehova, Super tribus sceleribus filiorum Ammon, et super quatuor non ero ei propitius; quia secuerunt gravidas (prægnantes) Gilead, ut propagarent suum terminum:

14. Et accendam ignem in

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wall of Rabbah, and it shall devour the palaces thereof, with shouting in the day of battle, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind:

15. And their king shall go into captivity, he and his princes together, saith the Lord.

muro Rabbah, qui vorabit palatia ejus in clamore (*vel*, jubilo) in die prœlii, in turbine die tempestatis:

15. Et transibit rex eorum in captivitatem, ipse et principes ejus simul, dicit Jehova.

He now prophesies against the Ammonites, who also derived their origin from the same common stock; for they were the posterity of Lot, as it is well known; and Lot was counted as the son of Abraham, as Abraham, having taken him with him from his country, brought him up, no doubt, as his own son. Then Abraham was the common father of the Jews and of the Ammonites. Now, when the children of Ammon, without any regard to relationship, joined their forces to those of enemies, and conspired together, their cruelty admitted of no excuse. And there is no doubt but that they were guilty of many other crimes; but God, by his Prophet, enumerates not all the sins for which he had purposed to punish them, and only points out distinctly, as in passing, but one sin, and generally declares, that each people were utterly past hope, for they had hardened themselves in their wickedness.

He therefore says of the children of Ammon, that *they rent the pregnant* women. Some take הרות, *erut*, for הרים, *erim*, mountains; but I see not what can induce them, unless they think it strange that pregnant women were rent, that the Ammonites might extend further their borders; and for this end, it would be more suitable to regard the word as meaning mountains; as though he said, "They have cut through mountains, even the earth itself; there has been no obstacle through which the Ammonites have not made their way: an insatiable cupidity has so inflamed them, that they have rent the very mountains, and destroyed the whole order of nature." Others take mountains metaphorically for fortified cities; for when one seeks to take possession of a kingdom, cities stand in his way like mountains. But this exposition is too strained.

Now, since הרות, *erut*, mean women with child, the word, I doubt not, is to be taken in its genuine and usual sense, as

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we see it to be done in Hosea. But why does the Prophet say, that the Ammonites had rent pregnant women? It is to show, that their cupidity was so frantic, that they abstained not from any kind of cruelty. It is possible that one be so avaricious as to seek to devour up the whole earth, and yet be inclined to clemency. Alexander, the Macedonian, though a bloody man, did yet show some measure of kindness: but there have been others much more cruel; as the Persians, of whom Isaiah speaks, who desired not money, but shed blood, (Isa. xiii. 17, &c.) So the Prophet says here of the Ammonites, that they not only, by unlawful means, extended their borders, used violence, and became robbers who spoiled others of their property, but also that they did not spare even women with child. Now this is the worst thing in the storming of towns. When a town has wearied out an enemy, both pregnant women, and children, and infants may, through fury, be destroyed: but this is a rare thing, and never allowed, except under peculiar circumstances. He then reproaches the Ammonites, not only for their cupidity, but also for having committed every kind of cruelty to satisfy their greediness: *they have* then *torn asunder women with child, that they might extend their borders.*

I will therefore kindle a fire in the wall of רבה, *Rabe, which shall devour its palaces,* (the Prophet adds nothing new, I shall therefore go on,) *and this by tumult,* or by clamour, *in the day of war.* The Prophet means that enemies would come and suddenly lay waste the kingdom of Ammon; and that this would be the case, as a sudden fire lays hold on wood, in the day of war; that is, as soon as the enemy attacked them, it would immediately put them to flight, and execute the vengeance they deserved, *by a whirlwind in the day of tempest.* By these figurative terms the Prophet intimates, that the calamity, destructive to the Ammonites, would be sudden.

He finally adds, *And their king shall go into captivity, he and his princes together.* As מלכם, *melcam,* was an idol of the people, some regard it here as a proper name; but he says, מלכם הוא ושריו, *melcam eva ushariu,* 'their king, he and his princes;' hence the Prophet, no doubt, names the king of Ammon, for he joins with him his princes. He says then

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that the ruin of the kingdom would be such, that the king himself would be led captive by the Assyrians. This prediction was no doubt fulfilled, though there is no history of it extant.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast designed, by so many examples, to teach the world the fear of thy name, we may improve under thy mighty hand, and not abuse thy forbearance, nor gather for ourselves a treasure of dreadful vengeance by our obstinacy and irreclaimable wickedness, but seasonably repent while thou invitest us, and while it is the accepted time, and while thou offerest to us reconciliation, that being brought to nothing in ourselves, we may gather courage through grace, which is offered to us through Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER II.

Lecture Fifty-first.

1. Thus saith the Lord, For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime:

2. But I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the palaces of Kirioth: and Moab shall die with tumult, with shouting, *and* with the sound of the trumpet.

3. And I will cut off the judge from the midst thereof, and will slay all the princes thereof with him, saith the Lord.

1. Sic dicit Jehova, Super tribus scelcribus Moab et super quatuor non convertam eum (*vel*, non convertam me, *sicut prius diximus,*) quia ipse combussit ossa regis Edom in calcem:

2. Et mittam ignem in Moab, qui comedet palatia, (קריות, *alii vertunt urbium appellativè; sed magis arbitror esse proprium nomen loci*) et morietur in tumultu Moab, in strepitu, in clangore tubæ.

3. Et excidam judicem è medio ejus, et omnes principes ejus occidam cum eo, dicit Jehova.

Now Amos prophesies here against the Moabites, and proclaims respecting them what we have noticed respecting the other nations,—that the Moabites were wholly perverse, that no repentance would be hoped for, as they had added crimes to crimes, and reached the highest pitch of wickedness; for, as we have said, the number, seven, imports this. The Prophet then charges the Moabites here with perverseness: and

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hence we learn that God's vengeance did not come hastily upon them, for their wickedness was intolerable, since they thus followed their crimes. But he mentions one thing in particular,—that *they had burnt the bones of the king of Edom.*

Some take bones here for courage, as though the Prophet had said, that the whole strength of Edom had been reduced into ashes: but this is a strained exposition; and its authors themselves confess that they are forced to it by necessity, when yet there is none. The comment given by the Rabbins does not please them,—that the body of a certain king had been burnt, and then that the Moabites had strangely applied the ashes for making a cement instead of lime. Thus the Rabbins trifle in their usual way; for when an obscure place occurs, they immediately invent some fable; though there be no history, yet they exercise their wit in fabulous glosses; and this I wholly dislike: but what need there is of running to allegory, when we may simply take what the Prophet says, —that *the body of the king of Edom had been burnt:* for the Prophet, I doubt not, charges the Moabites with barbarous cruelty. To dig up the bodies of enemies, and to burn their bones,—this is an inhuman deed, and wholly barbarous. But it was more detestable in the Moabites, who had some connection with the people of Edom; for they descended from the same family; and the memory of that relationship ought to have continued, since Abraham brought up Lot, the father of the Moabites; and thus the Moabites were under an obligation to the Idumeans. If then any humanity existed in them, they ought to have restrained their passions, so as not to treat so cruelly their brethren. Now, when they exceeded all moderation in war, and raged against dead bodies, and burnt the bones of the dead, it was, as I have said, an extremely barbarous conduct. The meaning then is, that the Moabites could no longer be borne with; for in this one instance, they gave an example of savage cruelty. Had there been a drop of humanity in them, they would have treated more kindly their brethren, the Idumeans; but they burnt *into lime,* that is, into ashes, *the bones of the king* of Edom, and thereby proved that they had forgotten all humanity and justice. We now understand the Prophet's meaning.

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He therefore adds a threatening, *I will send a fire on Moab, which shall devour the palaces of* קריות, *Koriut.* We have stated that what the Prophet means by these modes of speaking is, that God would consume the Moabites by a violent punishment as by a burning fire, that fortified places could not hinder him from executing his vengeance, and that though they were proud of their palaces, yet these would avail them nothing.

And he subjoins, *Moab shall die with tumult, with noise, with the sound of the trumpet;* that is, I will send strong enemies, who will come and make no peace with the Moabites, but will take possession of every place, and of fortified cities, by force and by the sword. For what the Prophet means by tumult, by shouting, by the sound of the trumpet, is, that the Moabites would not come under the power of their enemies by certain agreements and compacts, as when a voluntary surrender is made, which usually mitigates the hostile rage of enemies; no, he says, it shall not be so; for their enemies shall have not only their wealth but their lives also.

He finally adds, *And I will cut off the judge from the midst of her, and will slay her princes, saith Jehovah.* God here declares, that the kingdom of the Moabites and the people shall be no more; for we know that men cannot exist as a body without some civil government. Wherever then there is an assemblage of men, there must be princes to rule and govern them. Hence, when God declares that there would be no more a judge among the Moabites, it is the same thing as if he had said, that their name would be blotted out; for had the people of Moab continued, some princes must have necessarily, as we have said, remained among them. When princes then are destroyed, the people must also perish, for there is no security for them. The Prophet then denounces not here a temporary punishment on the Moabites, but utter ruin, from which they were never to rise. This is the meaning. Let us now proceed—

4. Thus saith the Lord, For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment*

4. Sic dicit Jehova, Super tribus sceleribus Jehudah, et super quatuor non convertam eum;

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thereof; because they have despised the law of the Lord, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked:

5. But I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.

quia spreverunt (*vel*, abjecerunt) legem Jehovæ, et statuta ejus non custodierunt; et errare eos fecerunt mendacia sua, post quæ ambulaverunt patres ipsorum:

5. Et mittam ignem in Jehudah, qui devorabit palatia Jerusalem.

Amos turns now his discourse to the tribe of Judah, and to that kingdom, which still continued in the family of David. He has hitherto spoken of heathen and uncircumcised nations: what he said of them was a prelude of the destruction which was nigh the chosen people; for when God spared not others who had through ignorance sinned, what was to become of the people of Israel, who had been taught in the law? For a servant, knowing his master's will, and doing it not, is worthy of many stripes, (Luke xii. 47.) God could not, then, forgive the children of Abraham, whom he had adopted as his peculiar people, when he inflicted such grievous punishments on heathen nations, whose ignorance, as it is commonly thought by men, was excusable. It is indeed true, that all who sin without law will justly perish, as Paul says in Rom. ii.: but when a comparison is made between the children of Israel and the wretched heathens, who were immersed in errors, the latter were doubtless worthy of being pardoned, when compared with that people who had betrayed their perverseness, and, as it were, designedly resolved to bring on themselves the vengeance of God.

The Prophet then having hitherto spoken of the Gentiles, turns his discourse now to the chosen people, the children of Abraham. But he speaks of the tribe of Judah, from which he sprang, as I said at the beginning; and he did this, lest any one should charge him with favouring his own countrymen: he had, indeed, migrated into the kingdom of Israel; but he was there a stranger. We shall now see how severely he reproved them. Had he, then, been silent as to the tribe of Judah, he might have been subject to calumny; for many might have said, that there was a collusion between him and his own countrymen, and that he concealed their vices, and

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that he fiercely inveighed against their neighbours, through a wicked emulation, in order to transfer the kingdom again into the family of David. Hence, that no such suspicion might tarnish his doctrine, the Prophet here summons to judgment the tribe of Judah, and speaks in no milder language of the Jews than of other nations: for he says, that they, through their stubbornness, had so provoked God's wrath, that there was no hope of pardon; for such was the mass of their vices, that God would now justly execute extreme vengeance, as a moderate chastisement would not be sufficient. We now then understand the Prophet's design.

I come now to the words: *For they have despised*, he says, *the law of Jehovah*. Here he charges the Jews with apostacy; for they had cast aside the worship of God, and the pure doctrine of religion. This was a crime the most grievous. We hence see, that the Prophet condemns here freely and honestly, as it became him, the vices of his own people, so that there was no room for calumny, when he afterwards became a severe censor and reprover of the Israelites; for he does not lightly touch on something wrong in the tribe of Judah, but says that they were apostates and perfidious, having cast aside the law of God. But it may be asked, why the Prophet charges the Jews with a crime so atrocious, since religion, as we have seen in the Prophecies of Hosea, still existed among them? But to this there is a ready answer: the worship of God was become corrupt among them, though they had not so openly departed from it as the Israelites. There remained, indeed, circumcision among the Israelites; but their sacrifices were pollutions, their temples were brothels: they thought that they worshipped God; but as a temple had been built at Bethel contrary to God's command, the whole worship was a profanation. The Jews were somewhat purer; but they, we know, had also degenerated from the genuine worship of God. Hence the Prophet does not unjustly say here, that they had despised the law of God.

But we must notice the explanation which immediately follows,—that *they kept not his statutes*. The way then by which Amos proves that the Jews were covenant-breakers, and that having repudiated God's law, they had fallen into

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wicked superstitions, is by saying, that they kept not the precepts of God. It may, however, appear that he treats them here with too much severity; for one might not altogether keep God's commands either through ignorance or carelessness, or some other fault, and yet be not a covenant-breaker or an apostate. I answer,—That in these words of the Prophet, not mere negligence is blamed in the Jews; but they are condemned for designedly, that is, knowingly and wilfully departing from the commandments of God, and devising for themselves various modes of worship. It is not then to keep the precepts of God, when men continue not under his law, but audaciously contrive for themselves new forms of worship; they regard not what God commands, but lay hold on anything pleasing that comes to their minds. This crime the Prophet now condemns in the Jews: and hence it was that they had despised the law of God. For men should never assume so much as to change any thing in the worship of God; but due reverence for God ought to influence them: were they persuaded of this—that there is no wisdom but what comes from God—they would surely confine themselves within his commands. Whenever then they invent new and fictitious forms of worship, they sufficiently show that they regard not what the Lord wills, what he enjoins, what he forbids. Thus, then, they despise his law, and even cast it away.

This is a remarkable passage; for we see, first, that a most grievous sin is condemned by the Prophet, and that sin is, that the Jews confined not themselves to God's law, but took the liberty of innovating; this is one thing: and we also learn how much God values obedience, which is better, as it is said in another place, than all sacrifices, (1 Sam. xv. 22.) And that we may not think this a light or a trifling sin, let us notice the expression—that they despised the law of God. Every one ought to dread this as the most monstrous thing; for we cannot despise the law of God without insulting his majesty. And yet the Holy Spirit declares here, that we repudiate and reject the law of God, except we wholly follow what it commands, and continue within the limits prescribed by it. We now perceive what the Prophet means.

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But he also adds, that *their own lies deceived* or *caused them to go astray*. He here confirms his preceding doctrine; for the Jews had ever a defence ready at hand, that they did with good intent what the Prophet condemned in them. They, forsooth! sedulously worshipped God, though they mixed their own leaven, by which their sacrifices were corrupted: it was not their purpose to spend their substance in vain, to undergo great expenses in sacrifices, and to undertake much labour, had they not thought that it was service acceptable to God! As then the pretence of good intention, (as they say,) ever deceives the unbelieving, the Prophet condemns this pretence, and shows it to be wholly fallacious, and of no avail. "It is nothing," he says, "that they pretend before God some good intention; their own lies deceive them." And Amos, no doubt, mentions here these lies, in opposition to the commands of God. As soon then as men swerve from God's word, they involve themselves in many delusions, and cannot but go astray; and this is deserving of special notice. We indeed see how much wisdom the world claims for itself: for as soon as we invent anything, we are greatly delighted with it; and the ape, according to the old proverb, is ever pleased with its own offspring. But this vice especially prevails, when by our devices we corrupt and adulterate the worship of God. Hence the Prophet here declares, that whatever is added to God's word, and whatever men invent in their own brains, is a lie: "All this," he says, "is nothing but imposture." We now see of what avail is good intention: by this indeed men harden themselves; but they cannot make the Lord to retract what he has once declared by the mouth of his Prophet. Let us then take heed to continue within the boundaries of God's word, and never to leap over either on this or on that side; for when we turn aside ever so little from the pure word of God, we become immediately involved in many deceptions.

It then follows, *After which have walked their fathers;* literally it is, *Which their fathers have walked after them:*[1] but we

[1] This is one of the peculiarities of the Hebrew language—the use of two pronouns, the one before, and the other after the verb; and the pre-

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have given the sense. The Prophet here exaggerates their sin, the insatiable rage of the people; for the children now followed their fathers. This vice, we know, prevailed in all ages among the Jews; leaving the word of God, they ever followed their own dreams, and the delusions of Satan. Since God had now often tried to correct this vice by his Prophets, and no fruit followed, the Prophet charges them here with hardness, and by this circumstance enhances the sin of the Jews: "It is nothing new," he says, "for children to imitate their fathers, and to be wholly like them: they are then the bad eggs of bad ravens." So also said Stephen, 'Ye are hard and uncircumcised in heart, and resist the Holy Spirit, as your fathers also did formerly,' (Acts vii.) We now understand the intention of the Prophet.

But we hence learn of what avail is the subterfuge resorted to by the Papists, when they boast of antiquity. For they set up against the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel, this shield,—that theirs is the old religion, that they have not been the first founders, but that they follow what has been handed down to them from early times, and observed for many ages. When the Papists boastingly declare all this, they think that they say enough to put God to silence, and wholly to reject his Word. But we see how frivolous is this sort of cavilling, and how worthless before God: for the Prophet does not concede to the Jews the example of the fathers as an excuse, but sets forth their sin as being greater, because they followed their perfidious fathers, who had forsaken the Law of the Lord. The same thing is also said by Ezekiel, 'After the precepts of your fathers walk not,' (chap. xx.) We now see what sort of crime is that of which the Prophet speaks. At last a threatening follows, 'The Lord saith, Fire will I send on Judah, which shall devour the

position, when necessary, is given with the latter, and not the former. There is a similar peculiarity in the Welsh, exactly the same and of common occurrence. There are several instances of likeness between the two languages, and even an identity of idiom, and that in those things in which they differ from other languages. In the present instance the Welsh is literally, word for word, the Hebrew—*y shai yr aeth eich tadau ar eu hol*—which your fathers have gone after them.—*Ed.*

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palaces of Jerusalem.' But all this we have already explained. Let us now proceed—

6. Thus saith the Lord, For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes.

6. Sic dicit Jehova, Super tribus sceleribus Israel et super quatuor non convertam eum (*vel*, ad eum,) quia emerunt (*vel*, vendiderunt; *quidam enim deducunt* à כרת, *et putant* מ *esse literam formalem nominis: alii autem deducunt à* מכר *quod est vendere vel mercari; sed sensus Prophetæ eodem redit, quia intelligit quasi ad nundinationem expositos fuisse justos; ideoque præstabit vertere, pretium ipsorum; quasi diceret, commercium non secus ac de merce vœnale fuisse habitum;* quoniam *ergo* emerunt) justum pro argento, et miserum pro calceamentis.

The Prophet here assails the Israelites, to whom he had been sent, as we have said at the beginning. He now omits every reference to other nations; for his business was with the Israelites, to whom he was especially appointed a teacher. But he wished to set before them, as in various mirrors, the judgment of God, which awaited them, that he might the more effectually awaken them: and he wished also to exhibit in the Jews themselves an example of the extreme vengeance of God, though there was greater purity among them, at least a purer religion, and more reverence for God prevailed as yet among them. He in this way prepared the Israelites, that they might not obstinately and proudly reject his doctrine. He now then addresses them, and says that they continued unmoved in their many sins. The import of the whole is, that if the Moabites, the Idumeans, the Tyrians, the Sidonians, and other nations, and that if the Jews as well as these were irreclaimable in their obstinacy, so that their diseases were incurable, and their wickedness such as God could no longer endure, the Israelites were also in the same condition; for they also continued perverse in their wickedness, and provoked God, and repented not, though God had waited long, and exhorted them to repent.

It is now meet for us to bear in mind what we have before said,—that if impiety was so rampant in that age, and the contempt of God so prevailed, that men could not be restored to a sane mind, and if iniquity everywhere overflowed, (for Amos accuses not a few people, but many nations,) let us at this day beware, lest such corruptions prevail among us; for,

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certainly, the world is now much worse than it was then: nay, since the Prophet says here, that both the Israelites and the Jews were wholly irreclaimable in their obstinacy, there is no excuse for us at this day for deceiving ourselves with an empty name, because we have the symbol of faith, having been baptized; and in case we have other marks, which seem to belong to the Church of God, let us not think that we are therefore free from guilt, if we allow ourselves that unruliness condemned here by the Prophet both in the Israelites and in the Jews; for they had become hardened against all instructions, against all warnings. Let, then, these examples rouse our attention, lest we, like them, harden ourselves so much as to constrain the Lord to execute on us extreme vengeance.

Let us now especially observe what the Prophet lays to the charge of Israel. He begins with their cruel deeds; but the whole book is taken up with reproofs; there is to the very end a continued accusation as to those crimes which then prevailed among the people of Israel. He does not then point out only one particular crime, as with respect to the other nations; but he scrutinizes all the vices of which the people were guilty, as though he would thoroughly anatomize them. But these we shall notice in their proper order.

Now as to the first thing, the Prophet says, that *the just* among the Israelites *was sold for silver*, yea, *for shoes*. It may be asked, Why is it that he does not begin with those superstitions, in which they surpassed the Jews? for if God had resolved to destroy Jerusalem and his own temple, because they had fallen away into superstitious and spurious modes of worship, how much more ought such a judgment to have been executed on the Israelites, as they had perverted the whole law, and had become wholly degenerate; and even circumcision was nothing but a profanation of God's covenant? Why, then, does not the Prophet touch on this point? To this I answer,—That as superstition had now for many years prevailed among them, the Prophet does not make this now his subject; but we shall hereafter see, that he hath not spared these ungodly depravations which had grown rampant among the Israelites. He indeed sharply arraigns all their superstí-

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tions; but he does this in its suitable place. It was now necessary to begin with common evils; and this was far more opportune than if he had at first spoken of superstitions; for they might have said, that they did indeed worship God. He therefore preferred condemning the Jews for alienating themselves from the pure commandments of God; and as to the Israelites, he reproves here their gross vices. But after having charged them with cruelty, shameless rapacity, and many lusts, after having exposed their filthy abominations, he then takes the occasion, as being then more suitable, of exclaiming against superstitions. This order our Prophet designedly observed, as we shall see more fully from the connection of his discourse.

I now return to the words, that they *sold the just for silver, and the poor for shoes*. He means that there was no justice nor equity among the Israelites, for they made a sale of the children of God: and it was a most shameful thing, that there was no remedy for injuries. For we hence, no doubt, learn, that the Prophet levels his reproof against the judges who then exercised authority. The just, he says, is sold for silver: this could not apply to private individuals, but to judges, to whom it belonged to extend a helping hand to the miserable and the poor, to avenge wrongs, and to give to every one his right. It is then the same as though the Prophet had said, that unbridled licentiousness reigned triumphant among the Israelites, so that just men were exposed as a prey, and were set, as it were, on sale. He says, first, that they were *sold for silver*, and then he adds, *for shoes:* and this ought to be carefully observed; for when once men begin to turn aside from the right course, they abandon themselves to evil without any shame. When an attempt is first made to draw aside a man that is just and upright and free from what is corrupt, he is not immediately overcome; though a great price may be offered to him, he will yet stand firm: but when he has sold his integrity for ten pieces of gold, he may afterwards be easily bought, as the case is usually with women. A woman, while she is pure, cannot be easily drawn away from her conjugal fidelity: she may yet be corrupted by a great price; and when once corrupted, she will afterwards

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prostitute herself, so that she may be bought for a crust of bread. The same is the case with judges. They, then, who at first covet silver, that is, who cannot be corrupted except by a rich and fat bribe, will afterwards barter their integrity for the meanest reward; for there is no shame any more remaining in them. This is what the Prophet points out in these words,—That they sold the just for silver; that is, that they sold him for a high price, and then that they were corrupted by the meanest gift, that if one offered them a pair of shoes, they would be ready without any blush of shame to receive such a bribe.

We now then see the crime of which Amos accused the Israelites. They could not raise an objection here, which they might have done, if he touched their superstitions. He wished therefore to acquire authority by reprobating first their manifest and obvious crimes. He afterwards, as it has been stated, speaks in its proper place, of that fictitious worship, which they, after having rejected the Law of God, embraced. It follows—

7. That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the *same* maid, to profane my holy name.

7. Anhelantes super pulverem terræ ad caput inopum, viam miserorum (*vel*, pauperum) deflectere facient: vir et pater ejus ingredientur ad puellam ut profanent nomen sanctum meum (*vel*, nomen sanctitatis meæ.)

Here Amos charges them first with insatiable avarice; they panted for the heads of the poor on the dust of the earth. This place is in my judgment not well understood. שָׁאַף, *shaph*, means to pant and to breathe, and is taken often metaphorically as signifying to desire: hence, some render the words, "They desire the heads of the poor to be in the dust of the earth;" that is, they are anxious to see the innocent cast down and prostrate on the ground. But there is no need of many words to refute this comment; for ye see that it is strained. Others say, that in their cupidity they cast down the miserable into the dust; they therefore think that a depraved cupidity is connected with violence, and they put the lust for the deed itself.

But what need there is of having recourse to these extra-

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neous meanings, when the words of the Prophet are in themselves plain and clear enough? He says that they *panted for the heads of the poor on the ground;* as though he had said, that they were not content with casting down the miserable, but that they gaped anxiously, until they wholly destroyed them. There is then nothing to be changed or added in the Prophet's words, which harmonize well together, and mean, that through cupidity they panted for the heads of the poor, after the poor had been cast down, and were laid prostrate in the dust. The very misery of the poor, whom they saw to be in their power, and lying at their feet, ought to have satisfied them: but when such an insatiable cupidity still inflamed them, that they panted for more punishment on the poor and the miserable, was it not a fury wholly outrageous? We now perceive the Prophet's meaning: He points out again what he has said in the former verse,—that the Israelites were given to rapacity, avarice, and cruelty of every kind.

He adds at last, *and the way of the miserable they pervert.* He still inveighs against the judges; for it can hardly comport with what belongs to private individuals, but it properly appertains to judges to pervert justice, and to violate equity for bribery; so that he who had the best cause became the loser, because he brought no bribe sufficiently ample. We now see what was the accusation he alleged against the Israelites. But there follows another charge, that of indulging in lusts.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we see so grievous punishments formerly executed on unbelievers who had never tasted of the pure knowledge of thy word, we may be warned by their example, so as to abstain from all wickedness, and to continue in pure obedience to thy word; and that, as thou hast made known to us that thou hatest all those superstitions and depravations by which we turn aside from thy word,—O grant, that we may ever be attentive to that rule which has been prescribed to us by thee in the Law, as well as in the Prophets and in the Gospel, so that we may constantly abide in thy precepts, and be wholly dependent on the words of thy mouth, and never turn

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aside either to the right hand or to the left, but glorify thy name, as thou hast commanded us, by offering to thee a true, sincere, and spiritual worship, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Fifty-second.

It follows, in the seventh verse, that *the son and the father entered in into the same maid.* The Prophet here charges the people of Israel with the unbridled lusts which prevailed then among them; which were promiscuous and even incestuous. It is, we know, a detestable monstrosity, when a father and a son have connection with the same woman; for the common feeling of mankind abhors such flagitiousness. But the Israelites were so much addicted to their own lusts, that the father and the son had the same woman in common; as indeed it must happen, when men allow themselves excessive indulgences. A strumpet will, indeed, readily admit a son and a father without any difference, for she has no shame; and no fear of God restrains abandoned women given up to filthiness. It hence becomes a common thing for a father and a son to pollute themselves by an incestuous concubinage. But it is no diminution of guilt before God, when men, blinded by their lusts, make no difference, and without any discrimination, and without any shame, follow their own sinful propensities. Whenever this happens, it certainly proves that there is no fear of God, and that even the common feeling of nature is extinct. Hence the Prophet now justly condemns in the Israelites this crime, —that the father and the son entered in into the same woman.

An amplification of this crime is also added,—that they thus polluted *the holy name* of God. We indeed know that the people of Israel were chosen for this end—that the name of God might be supplicated by them; and well known is that declaration, often repeated by Moses, 'Be ye holy, for I am holy,' (Lev. xi. 44.) Hence the children of Israel could not defile themselves without polluting at the same time the name of God, which was engraven on them. God then complains here of this profanation; for the children of Israel not only contaminated themselves, but also profaned

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whatever was sacred among them, inasmuch as the name of God was exposed to reproach, when the people thus gave way to their filthy lusts. We now understand what the Prophet means. It follows—

8. And they lay *themselves* down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned *in* the house of their God.

8. Et super vestes oppignoratas accubuerunt prope omne altare, et vinum damnatorum biberunt in domo Dei sui.

Here the Prophet again inveighs against the people's avariciousness, and addresses his discourse especially to the chief men; for what he mentions could not have been done by the common people, as the lower and humbler classes could not make feasts by means of spoils gained by judicial proceedings. The Prophet then condemns here, no doubt, the luxury and rapacity of men in high stations. *They lie down*, he says, *on pledged clothes nigh every altar*. God had forbidden, in his law, to take from a poor man a pledge, the need of which he had for the support of life and daily use, (Exod. xxii. 26.) For instance, it was prohibited by the law to take from a poor man his cloak or his coat, or to take the covering of his bed, or any thing else of which he had need. But the Prophet now accuses the Israelites, that they took away pledges and clothes without any distinction, and lay down on them nigh their altars. This belonged to the rich.

Then follows another clause, which, strictly speaking, must be restricted to the judges and governors, *They have drunk the wine of the condemned in the house*, or in the temple, *of their God*. This may also be understood of the rich, who were wont to indulge in luxury by means of ill-gotten spoils: for they litigated without cause; and when they gained judgment in their favour, they thought it lawful to fare more sumptuously. This expression of the Prophet may therefore be extended to any of the rich. But he seems here to condemn more specifically the cruelty and rapaciousness of the judges. We now then perceive what the Prophet had in view by saying, that they *lay down on pledged garments*.

He then says that *they drank wine* derived *from fines*, which

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had been laid on the condemned. But this circumstance, that is added, ought to be observed,—that they *lay down near altars* and *drank* in the very temple: for the Prophet here laughs to scorn the gross superstition of the Israelites, that they thought that they were discharging their duty towards God, provided they came to the temple and offered sacrifices at the altar. Thus, indeed, are hypocrites wont to appease God, as if one by puppets played with a child. This has been a wickedness very common in all ages, and is here laid to the charge of the Israelites by the Prophet: they dared with an open front to enter the temple, and there to bring the pledged garments, and to feast on their spoils. Hypocrites do ever make a den of thieves of God's temple, (Matth. xxi. 13;) for they think that all things are lawful for them, provided they put on the appearance, by external worship, of being devoted to God. Since, then, the Israelites promised themselves impunity and took liberty to sin, because they performed religious ceremonies, the Prophet here sharply reproves them: they even dared to make God a witness of their cruelty by bringing pledged garments and by blending their spoils with their sacrifices, as though God had a participation with robbers.

We hence see that rapaciousness and avarice are not alone condemned here by the Prophet, but that the gross superstition of the Israelites is also reprobated, because they thought that there would be no punishment for them, though they plundered and robbed the poor, provided they reserved a part of the spoil for God, as though a sacrifice from what had been unjustly got were not an abomination to him.

But it may be asked, Why does the Prophet thus condemn the Israelites, for they had no sacred temple; and we also know (as it has been elsewhere stated) that the temples, in which they thought that they worshipped God, were filthy brothels, and full of all obscenity. How is it, then, that the Prophet now so sharply inveighs against them, because they mingled their spoils with their impure sacrifices? To this the answer is, That he had regard to their views, and derided the grossness of their minds, that they thus childishly trifled with the God whom they imagined for themselves. We say

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the same at this day to the Papists,—that they blend profane with sacred things, when they prostitute their masses, and also when they trifle with God in their ceremonies. It is certain, that whatever the Papists do is an abomination; for the whole of religion is with them adulterated: but they yet cease not to wrong God, whose name they pretend to profess. Such also were then the Israelites: though they professed still to worship God, they were yet sacrilegious; though they offered sacrifices to the calves in Dan and in Bethel, they yet reproached God, for they ever abused his name. This, then, is the crime the Prophet now condemns in them. But what I have said must be remembered,—that this blind assurance is reprehended in the Israelites, that they thought spoils to be lawful, provided they professed to worship God: but they thus rendered double their crime, as we have said; for they tried to make God the associate of robbers, mingling as they did their pollutions with their sacrifices. Let us proceed—

9. Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height *was* like the height of the cedars, and he *was* strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath.

9. Et ego exterminavi Amorrhæum à facie ipsorum, cujus proceritas erat sicut proceritas cedrorum, et qui fortis erat sicut quercus; et perdidi fructum ejus supernè et radicem ejus subtus.

10. Also I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite.

10. Et ego eduxi vos è terra Egypti, et deduxi vos (ambulare feci vos, *ad verbum*) in deserto per quadraginta annos ad possidendam terram Amorrhæi.

11. And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. *Is it* not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the Lord.

11. Et suscitavi ex filiis vestris prophetas, et ex juvenibus vestris Nazaræos: annon etiam hoc, filii Israel? dicit Jehova.

12. But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not.

12. Et propinastis Nazaræis vinum, et super prophetis mandastis, dicendo, Non prophetabitis.

God expostulates here with the Israelites for their ingratitude. He records the benefits he had before conferred on that people; and then shows how unworthily and disgracefully they had conducted themselves; for they forgot their many blessings and proudly despised God, and acted as if they were like other nations, and not bound to God for the singular benefit of adoption. The sum then is, that God here com-

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plains, that he had ill bestowed his blessings; and he reproves the people for their impiety, inasmuch as they did not lead a holier life after having been freely redeemed.

He says first, *I have exterminated the Amorite before their face.* God shows here that he was disgracefully defrauded by the Israelites, for whose sake he had previously destroyed the Amorites. For why were the Amorites exterminated, but that God would cleanse the land, and also, that he might give there a dwelling to his own people, that he might be purely worshipped? Then the people of Israel ought to have given up themselves wholly to the service of God; but as they neglected to do this, they frustrated the purpose of God, who had expelled the Amorites from that land, yea, and entirely destroyed them. The first complaint then is, that the children of Israel were nothing better than the Amorites, though God had given them the land, which was taken from its natives, that they might dwell in it, and on the condition, that his name should be there worshipped. Hence the Prophets say elsewhere, that they were Amorites. They ought to have been a new people; but as they followed the examples of others, in what did they differ from them? They are therefore called their posterity. But the Prophet speaks not here so severely; he only reproves the Israelites, because they differed in nothing from the Amorites, whom they knew to have been destroyed that they might be introduced into their place, and succeed to their inheritance.

It is then added, that the *Amorites were tall* in stature, and also that they were *strong* men. By these words the Prophet intimates that the Amorites were not conquered by the people's valour, but by the wonderful power of God. We indeed know that they were dreaded by the people of Israel, for they were like giants. Then the Prophet speaks here of their height and strength, that the Israelites might consider that they overcame them not by their own valour, but that the land was given them by a miracle, for they had to do with giants, on whom they could hardly dare to look. It was then God who prostrated the cedars and the oaks before his people. We hence learn, that the Israelites could not boast of their own strength, as though they took possession

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of the land, because by means of war they ejected their enemies; for this was done by the singular kindness of God. They could not indeed have contended with their enemies, had not that been fulfilled which the Lord had so often foretold, 'For you, while still, I will fight,' (Exod. xiv. 14.) We now perceive the Prophet's intention. But we may hence farther learn, that the Israelites had not possessed the land, because they were more excellent than the Amorites, its ancient inhabitants; but because it so pleased God. There was therefore no reason for the people of Israel to be proud on account of any excellency. It hence appears that they, who did not consider this remarkable kindness done to them, were more than doubly ungrateful to God.

He says that their *fruit above and root below were destroyed.* By this metaphor God enlarges on what he said before, that the Amorites had been exterminated, so that none of them remained. "I have demolished," he says, or, "I have entirely destroyed the root beneath, and the fruit above; I have extinguished the very name of the nation." And yet the Israelites were not better, though the Amorites were thus destroyed; but having succeeded in their place, they became like them: this was utterly inexcusable. The more severe God's vengeance had been towards the Amorites, the more ought the Israelites to have extolled his favour: but when with closed eyes they passed by so remarkable a testimony of God's paternal love, it appears that they were extremely wicked and ungrateful.

He afterwards subjoins, *I have made you to ascend from the land of Egypt; I have made you to walk in the desert for forty years, in order to possess the land of the Amorite.* The circumstances here specified are intended to confirm the same thing, —that God had miraculously redeemed his people. Men, we know, for the most part extenuate the favours of God; nay, this evil is innate in us. This is the reason why the Prophet so largely describes and extols the redemption of the people. Hence he says now, that they had been *led out of the land of Egypt.* And they ought to have remembered what had been their condition in Egypt; for there they were most miserably oppressed. When therefore that coming out was set

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before them, it was the same as if God had reminded them how shamefully they had been treated, and how hard had been their bondage in Egypt. That beginning ought to have humbled them, and also to have stimulated them to the cultivation of piety. When now they proudly exulted against God, when no recollection of their deliverance laid hold on them, this vice is justly laid to their charge by the Prophet: "See," he says, "I have *brought you forth from the land of Egypt;* what were ye then? what was your nobility? what was your wealth or riches? what was your power? For the Egyptians treated you as the vilest slaves; your condition then was extremely ignominious; ye were as lost, and I redeemed you: and now buried is the recollection of so illustrious a kindness, which deserved to be for ever remembered."

He afterwards adds, *I have made you to walk, &c.* The Prophet here reminds them of the desert, that the Israelites might know that God might have justly closed up against them an entrance into the land, though he had promised it for an inheritance to Abraham. For how was it that the Lord led them about for so long a time, except that they, as far as they could, had denied God, and rendered themselves unworthy of enjoying the promised land? Then the Prophet indirectly blames the Israelites here for having been the cause why God detained them for forty years without introducing them immediately into the promised land; which might have easily been done, had they not closed the door against themselves by their ingratitude. This is one reason why the Prophet now speaks of the forty years. And then, as God had in various ways testified his kindness towards the Israelites, he had thus bound them the more to himself; but an ungodly forgetfulness had buried all his favours. God daily rained manna on them from heaven; he also gave them drink from a dry rock; he guided them during the day by a pillar of cloud, and in the night by fire: and we also know how often God bore with them, and how many proofs he gave them of his forbearance. The Prophet, then, by speaking here of the forty years, meant to counsel the Israelites to call to mind the many favours, by which they were bound to God,

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while they were miraculously led by him for forty years in the desert.

He now subjoins, *I have raised from your sons Prophets, and Nazarenes from your young*, or strong *men*, (for בחרים, *becherim*, as we have elsewhere said, are called by the Hebrews chosen men;) then from your youth or chosen men have I raised *Nazarenes*. *Was it not so, O children of Israel?* or certainly it was so: for the particle אף, *aph*, sometimes is a simple affirmation, and sometimes an addition. *Is not* then *all this true, O children of Israel? saith Jehovah.* God first reminds them that he had raised up Prophets from their sons. It is a remarkable proof of God's love, that he deigns to guide his people by Prophets: for if God were to speak himself from heaven, or to send his angels down, it would apparently be much more dignified; but when he so condescends as to employ mortal men and our own brethren, who are the agents of his Spirit, in whom he dwells, and by whose mouth he speaks, it cannot indeed be esteemed as highly as it deserves, that the Lord should thus accommodate himself to us in so familiar a manner. This is the reason why he now says, that he had *raised up Prophets from their sons*. They might have objected and said, that he had introduced the Law, and that then the heaven was moved, and that the earth shook: but he speaks of his daily favour in having been pleased to speak continually to his people, as it were, from mouth to mouth, and this by men: *I have raised up*, he says, *Prophets from your sons;* that is, "I have chosen angels from the midst of you." The Prophets are indeed, as it were, celestial ambassadors, and God commands them to be heard, the same as if he himself appeared in a visible form. Since then he chooses angels from the midst of us, is not this an invaluable favour? We hence see how much force is contained in this reproof, when the Lord says, that Prophets had been chosen from his own people.

And he mentions also the *Nazarenes*. It appears sufficiently evident from Num. chap. vi., why God appointed Nazarenes. Nothing is more difficult, we know, than to induce men to follow a common rule; for they ever seek something new; and hence have arisen so many devices, so

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many additions, in short, so many leavenings by which God's worship is corrupted; for each wishes to be more holy than another, and affects some singularity. In case then any one had a wish to consecrate himself to God beyond what was commonly required, the Lord instituted a peculiar observance, that the people might not attempt any thing without at least his permission. Hence, when any one wished to consecrate himself to God, though they were all holy, he yet observed certain regulations: he abstained from wine; he allowed his hair to grow; in a word, he observed those ceremonial rites which we find in the chapter already referred to. God now reminds the Israelites that he had omitted nothing calculated to preserve them pure and holy, and entire in his worship.

After having related these two things, he asks them, *Is not all this true?* The facts were indeed well known: then the question, it may be said, was superfluous. But the Prophet designedly asked the Israelites the question here—Is it not so? that he might more deeply touch their hearts. We indeed often despise things well known, and we see how many heedlessly allow what they hear, and pass by things without any thought. Such must have been the torpidity of the Israelites; they might have confessed without disputing that all this was true,—that the Lord had raised up Prophets from their children, and that he had given to them that peculiar service of which we have spoken; but they might, at the same time, have contemptuously overlooked the whole, had not this been added: "What do ye mean, O Israelites? ye do indeed see that nothing has been left undone by me to retain you in my service: how then is it now, that your lust leads you away from me, and that having shaken off the yoke, ye grow thus wanton against me?" We now perceive why the Prophet inserted this clause, for it was necessary that the Israelites should be more sharply roused, that being convicted, they might acknowledge their guilt.

But it now follows, *Ye have to the Nazarites quaffed wine, and on the Prophets ye have laid a command, that they should not prophesy.* God complains here that the service which he had instituted had been violated by the people. It seems indeed a light offence, that wine had been given to the

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Nazarites; for the kingdom of God, we know, is not meat and drink, (1 Cor. viii. 8:) though this saying of Paul was not yet made known, it was yet true in all ages. It was then lawful for the Nazarites to drink wine, provided they used moderation. To this the simple answer is, that it was lawful to drink wine, for they of their own accord undertook to abstain from it. In similar manner God forbad the priests to drink wine or strong drink whenever they entered the temple. God indeed did not wish to be served with this kind of ceremony; but his intention was to show, by such a rite, that a greater temperance is required in priests than in the people in general. His purpose then was to withdraw them from the common mode of living, when they entered the temple; for they were as mediators between God and his people: they ought then to have consecrated themselves in a special manner. We now see that the priests were reminded by this external symbol, that greater holiness was required in them than in the people. The same thing must be also said of the Nazarites. The Nazarites might drink wine; but during the time they consecrated themselves to God, they were not allowed to drink wine, that they might thereby acknowledge that they were in a manner separated from the common habits of men, and were come nearer to God. We now understand why it was not lawful for the Nazarites to drink wine.

But it is frivolous for the Papists to pretend this example, and to introduce it in defence of their superstitions, and of their foolish and rash vows, which they undertake without any regard to God: for God expressly sanctioned and confirmed whatever the Nazarites did under the law. Let the Papists show a proof for their monastic vows, and foolish rites, by which they now trifle with God. We also know that there is a great difference between the Nazarites and the Papal monks: for the monks vow perpetual celibacy; others vow abstinence from flesh during life; and these things are done foolishly and rashly. They indeed think that the worship of God consists in these trifles. They promise what is not in their own power; for they renounce marriage, when they know not whether they are endued with the gift of chastity. And to abstain from flesh all their life is more

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foolish still, because they make this to be a part of God's service. I do, at the same time, wonder that they bring forward this example, since there are none so holy under the Papacy as to abstain from wine. As for the Carthusians and other monks of the holier sort, they seem determined to take revenge on abstinence from flesh; for they choose the sweetest and the liveliest wine; as though they intended to get a compensation for the loss and deprivation they undergo, when they pledge to God their abstinence from flesh, by reserving the best wine for themselves. These things are extremely ludicrous. Besides, it is a sufficient reply, if we adduce what I have already said,—that the Nazarites did nothing under the law but what God in his word approved and sanctioned.

Since God then so sharply and severely reproved the Israelites for giving wine to the Nazarites, what must be expected now, when we transgress the chief commandments of God, when we corrupt his whole spiritual worship? It seemed apparently but a venial sin, so to speak, in the Nazarites to drink wine. Had they become wanton or robbed, or had they done wrong to their brethren, or committed forgery, the charge against them would have doubtless been much more atrocious. Yet the Prophet does not now abstain from bitterly complaining that they drank wine. Then, since God would have us to worship him in a spiritual manner, a much heavier charge lies against us, if we violate his spiritual worship. As, for instance, if we now pollute the sacraments, if we corrupt the purity of divine worship, if we treat his word with scorn, yea, if we transgress as to these main points of religion, much less is our excuse. Let us then remember that the Prophet here reproves the Israelites for giving wine to the Nazarites.

He then adds, that they *commanded the Prophets not to prophesy*. It is certain that the Prophets were not forbidden to speak, at least expressly forbidden: but when the liberty of teaching faithfully as they ought to do is taken away from God's servants, and a command to this effect is given them, it is the same thing as to reject wholly their doctrine. The Israelites wished Prophets to be among them;

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and yet they could not endure their plain reproofs. But when they had polluted the worship of God, when their whole conduct became dissolute, the Prophets sharply inveighed against them: this freedom could not be endured by the Israelites; they wished to be spared and flattered. What then the Prophet now lays to their charge is, that they forbad God's servants to declare the word freely and honestly as God had commanded them. Hence he says, *On the Prophets they have laid a charge, that they should not prophesy.*

This evil reigns in the world at this day. It would indeed be an execrable audacity wholly to reject the Lord's word; this is what even ungodly men dare not openly to do: but they wish at the same time some middle course to be adopted, that God might not fully exercise authority over them. They then would gladly put restraint on the Holy Spirit, so as not to allow him to speak but within certain limitations: "See, we willingly allow thee some things, but this we cannot bear: so much asperity is extremely odious." And under the Papacy at this day the liberty of prophesying is wholly suppressed: and among us how many there are who wish to impose laws on God's servants, beyond which they are not to pass? But we see what the Prophet says here,—that the word of God is repudiated when the freedom of teaching is restrained, and men wish to be flattered, and desire their sins to be covered, and cannot bear free admonitions.

Let us also notice the word *command*, which the Prophet uses. צוה, *tsue*, means to order, to command, or to determine, in an authoritative manner. The Prophet then does not expostulate with them, because there were many who clamoured, who murmured against the Prophets, as it is always the case; but he rather condemns the audacity of the chief men for daring to consult how they might silence the Prophets, and not allow them the free liberty of teaching, as we find it to be done even now. For not only in taverns and lurking-places do the ungodly clamour when their sins are severely reproved, but they also go forth publicly and complain that too much liberty is allowed the ministers of the word, and that some course ought to be adopted to make them speak more moderately. It is then this sacrilege that

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the Prophet now rebukes, when he says, that the ungodly *commanded the Prophets, that they should not prophesy*, as though they made a law, as though they wished to proclaim a decree, that the Prophets should not speak so boldly and so freely. It now follows—

13. Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed *that is* full of sheaves.

13. Ecce ego angustians (*vel*, angustiatus, constrictus, *vel*, constringens) in loco vestro (*vel*, sub vobis,) sicuti constringitur plaustrum quod plenum est manipulo (*id est*, manipulis.)

The verb עיק, *oik*, in Hebrew is often transitive, and it is also a neuter. This place then may admit of two interpretations. The first is, that God was pressed under the Israelites, as a waggon groans under too much weight; and so God expostulates by Isaiah, that he was weighed down by the Israelites, 'Ye constrain me,' he says, 'to labour under your sins,' (Isa. i. 14.) The sense then, that God was pressed down under them, may be viewed as not unsuitable: and yet the more received interpretation is this, "Behold, I will bind you fast as a waggon is bound." I am, however, more inclined to take the first meaning,—that God here reprehends the Israelites, because he had been pressed down by them: for תחתיכם, *tacheticam*, properly signifies, "Under you," which some render, but strainedly, "In your place:" for when the verb is transitive, they say, that תחתיכם, *tacheticam*, must be rendered, "In your place:" but this is frigid and forced; and the whole passage will run better, if we say, "I am bound fast under you, as though ye were a waggon full of sheaves;"[1] that is, "Ye are to me intolerable." For God

[1] This verse has caused great labour to commentators; and many have been the views given. The first difficulty is in the words rendered in our version, "under you." תחת and with the *Iod* commonly added when there is a suffix, often occurs, and means no doubt, a place, a spot, a standing, as in the following passages: Exod. x. 23; xvi. 29; 1 Sam. xiv. 9; Hab. iii. 16; and this seems to be its meaning here. Then the second difficulty is about "the cart" or the waggon. Some consider it to be the vehicle to carry corn; and others, the machine to thresh it, as Newcome and others do: but this view is not consistent with the other expressions used in this clause.

A critic, quoted by Poole, evidently gives the meaning in these words, Sensus est, q. d. Ego vos in eas angustas adducam, unde vos ipsos minimè expedire valeatis—"The sense is, as though he said, I will bring

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carried that people on his shoulders; and when they loaded him with the burden of iniquities, it is no wonder that he said that they were like a waggon—a waggon filled with many sheaves: "Ye are light as wind, but ye are also to me very burdensome, and I am forced at length to shake you off:" and this he afterwards shows.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast not only redeemed us by the blood of thy only begotten Son, but also guidest us during our earthly pilgrimage, and suppliest us with whatever is needful,—O grant, that we may not be unmindful of so many favours, and turn away from thee and follow our sinful desires, but that we may continue bound to thy service, and never burden thee with our sins, but submit ourselves willingly to thee in true obedience, that by glorifying thy name we may carry thee both in body and soul, until thou at length gatherest us into that blessed kingdom which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy Son. Amen.

Lecture Fifty-third.

14. Therefore the flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong shall not strengthen his force, neither shall the mighty deliver himself:

15. Neither shall he stand that handleth the bow; and *he that is* swift of foot shall not deliver *himself:* neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself.

14. Peribit fuga à veloce, et fortis non roborabit vires suas, et robustus non servabit (non liberabit) animam suam:

15. Et tenens arcum non stabit, et velox pedibus suis non liberabit, neque ascensor equi liberabit animam suam.

you to those straits, from which ye will by no means be able to deliver yourselves." I would then translate the verse thus:—

Behold, I will confine *you* in your place,
As a waggon confines its load—the sheaves;
or, word for word,
As a waggon confines the filling of it—the sheaf.

The rendering of the last line by Newcome is certainly not what the original will bear: his translation of the whole verse is this:—

Therefore, behold I will press your place,
As a loaded corn-wain presseth its sheaves.

It is not pressing or crushing that corresponds with the contents of the following verses, but confining and reducing to straits from which they could not escape.—*Ed.*

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16. And *he that is* courageous among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day, saith the Lord.

16. Et qui robustus est corde suo inter fortes nudus fugiet die illa, dicit Jehova.

I explained yesterday the verse, in which the Prophet says, in the name of God, that the people were like a grievous and heavy burden, as though they were a waggon laden with many sheaves. I stated that the Prophet's words are differently explained by many interpreters, who give this view,—that God compares himself to a loaded waggon, under which the people were to be crushed. But no necessity constrains us to take the same verb in two senses, active and neuter, as they do; and then the comparison seems not quite suitable; and farther, it is better, as I have said, to say, that God complains, that he was loaded and pressed down under the people, than to render תחתיכם, *tacheticam*, "In your place;" for this is wholly a strained rendering. But most suitable is the Prophet's meaning, when understood as the complaint of God, that it was a grievous thing to bear the burdens of the people, when he saw that they were men of levity, and, at the same time, burdensome.

Hence the Prophet now denounces vengeance such as they deserved; and he says first, *Perish shall flight from the swift*, &c., that is, no one will be so swift as to escape by fleeing; and the *valiant* shall do nothing by fighting; for it is to confirm strength when one resists an adversary and repels assaults. The valiant, therefore, shall fight with no advantage; and then, *The strong shall not deliver his own life: he who holds the bow shall not stand;* that is, he who is equipped with a bow, and repels his enemy at a distance, shall not be able to stand in his place. *He who is swift on foot shall not be able to flee, nor he who mounts a horse;* which means, that whether footmen or horsemen, they shall not, by their celerity, be able to escape death. And, lastly, he who is stout and intrepid in heart among the valiant shall *flee away naked*, being content with life alone, and only anxious to provide for his own safety.

The Prophet intimates by all these words, that so grievous would be the slaughter of the people, that it would be a miracle if any should escape.

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We now then see how severely the Prophet at the very beginning handled this people. He no doubt observed their great obduracy: for he would not have assailed them so sharply at first, had they not been for a long time rebellious and had despised all warnings and threatenings. Amos was not the first who addressed them; but the Israelites had hardened themselves against all threatenings before he came to them. It therefore behoved him sharply to reprove them, as God treats men according to their disposition. I come now to the third chapter.

CHAPTER III.

1. Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying,

2. You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

1. Audite verbum hoc quod pronunciat Jehova super vos, filii Israel, super totam familiam eduxi (*vel*, ascendere feci) è terra Ægypti, dicendo,

2. Tantummodo vos cognovi ex omnibus familiis terræ: propterea visitabo super vos omnes iniquitates vestras.

The Prophet wished doubtless by these words to confirm his own authority, for he saw that his doctrine was regarded with contempt: and it is probable that the words recited here were not only once delivered by him, but had been often repeated. We know how great was the pride and confidence of that people: it was therefore needful to beat it down, that they might be habituated to dread and fear, when God reproved them by his Prophets.

It was then the common mode of speaking, when he said, *Hear the word which God hath spoken concerning you, O children of Israel.* He brings forward here the name of God, that they might know that they had not to do with a mortal man, or with a shepherd, such as he was. We then observe here, what I have just referred to, and that is, that the Prophet seeks to strengthen his authority as a teacher, that he might gain more respect among the people. But he adds, *concerning the whole family which I brought up out of Egypt.* It is certain that this discourse was not addressed except

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to the ten tribes; why, then, does the Prophet speak here so generally? Even because the kingdom of Israel formed the greater portion of the race of Abraham, and on this account they boasted that the adoption continued to be possessed by them. Since, then, they despised the tribe of Judah, and the half-tribe of Benjamin, which was connected with it, and had ever boasted of their great number, the Prophet says here, by way of concession, that they were indeed the blessed seed, the posterity of Abraham; in a word, the elect people, whom God had redeemed from Egypt. Then the Prophet includes not here the kingdom of Judah, but concedes to the Israelites what they boasted,—that they were the elect people, the holy race of Abraham, the very nation which had been miraculously delivered. "Let, then," he says, "all these boastings be granted, yet God will not, on this account, desist from executing his judgment upon them."

We now apprehend the design of the Prophet: he first seeks to gain respect for his doctrine, and takes occasion to speak of his own vocation, that he brought nothing of his own, but only discharged faithfully the office committed to him; yea, that he was the organ of the Holy Spirit, and adduced nothing from his own mind, but only spoke what the Lord had commanded him. And then, as the Israelites, relying on their large number, thought that wrong was done them, when they were severely reprehended by the Prophets, and as there was an absurd rivalship between them and the kingdom of Judah, the Prophet concedes to them that for which they were foolishly proud; but, at the same time, he shows that they in vain confided in their number, inasmuch as God summoned them to judgment, though they were the elect people, and the holy seed, and the redeemed nation. These are the main points.

The Prophet afterwards declares what he had in charge, *Only you have I known of all the families of the earth: I will therefore visit you for your iniquities.* Many think that he still concedes to the Israelites what they were wont to boast of,—that they were separated from the common class of men, because the Lord had adopted them: but it seems rather to be a reproach cast on them. God then brings forward here

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his benefits, of which we noticed yesterday a similar instance, that he might enhance the more the sin of the people, in returning the worst recompense to God, by whom they had been so liberally and so kindly treated: "I," he says, "have loved you *only*." It is indeed true, that the Israelites, as we have in other places often observed, gloried in their privileges; but the Prophet seems not to have this in view. God then expostulates with them for being so ungrateful: *You only*, he says, *have I known*. It is indeed certain, that God's care is extended to the whole human race, yea even to oxen and asses, and to the very sparrows. Even the young of ravens cry to him, and the smallest bird is fed by him. We hence see that God's providence extends to all mortal beings; but yet not in an equal degree. God has ever known all men so as to give what is needful to preserve life. God has, therefore, made his sun to rise on all the human race, and has also made the earth to produce food. Then as to the necessaries of life, he performs the office of a Father towards all men. But he has known his chosen people, because he has separated them from other nations, that they might be like his own family. Israel, then, is said to be known, because God favoured them alone with a gratuitous adoption, and designed them to be a peculiar people to himself. This is the knowledge of which the Prophet now speaks.

But by saying that they *only* רַק, *rek*, had been *known*, he shows that they had been chosen through God's singular favour, for there was no difference between the seed of Abraham and other nations, when regarded in themselves; otherwise this exception would have been superfluous. For if there had been any superiority or merit in the people of Israel, this objection might have readily been made, "We have indeed been chosen, but not without cause, for God had respect to our worthiness." But as they in nothing differed from other nations, and as the condition of all was alike by nature, the Lord upbraids them with this, that he had *known them only*; as though he said, "How has it happened, that ye are my peculiar possession and heritage? Has it been by your merit? Has it been, because I was more bound to you than to other nations? Ye cannot allege these things. It has therefore been my gratuitous

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adoption. Ye are then the more bound to me, and less excusable is your ingratitude for rendering to me so unjust a recompense." So also Paul says, 'Who makes thee to differ?' (1 Cor. iv. 7.) He wished to show that every excellency in men ought to be ascribed to God. For the same purpose it is said here, *you only* have I loved and *known of all the families of the earth:* "What were you? Ye were even the children of Adam, as all other nations; the same has been the beginning of all. There is then no reason for you to say, that I was attached to you by any prepossession; I freely chose you and chose you alone." All this tends to amplify grace; and ingratitude on their part does hereby appear more evident. For had God spoken these words of his general benefits, the guilt of his chosen people would not have been so great: but when he says that they *only* had been chosen, when others were passed by, their impiety seemed doubtless more base and wicked in not acknowledging God in their turn, so as to devote themselves wholly to Him, to whom they owed every thing.

And the bounty of God shines forth also in this respect, that he had known the Israelites alone, though there were many other nations. Had God owed any thing to men, he would not have kept it from them; this is certain. But since he repudiated all other nations, it follows, that they were justly rejected, when he made no account of them. Whence then was it that he chose the Israelites? We here see how highly is God's grace exalted by this comparison of one people with all other nations. And the same thing also appears from these words, *of all the families of the earth;* as though God had said, "There were many nations in the world, the number of men was very great; but I regarded them all as nothing, that I might take you under my protection; and thus I was content with a small number, when all men were mine; and this I have done through mere favour, for there was nothing in you by which ye excelled others, nor could they allege that they were unjustly rejected. Since then I preferred you of my own will, it is evident that I was under no obligation to you." We now then understand the design of the Prophet's words.

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He then subjoins, *I will therefore visit upon you your iniquities.* God declares here, that the Israelites would have to suffer a heavier judgment, because they acknowledged not their obligations to God, but seemed wilfully to despise his favour and to scorn him, the Author of so many blessings. Since then the Israelites were bound by so many and so singular benefits, and they at the same time were as wicked as other nations, the Prophet shows, that they deserved a heavier punishment, and that God's judgment, such as they deserved, was nigh at hand. This is the substance of the whole. It now follows—

3. Can two walk together, except they be agreed?
4. Will a lion roar in the forest when he hath no prey? will a young lion cry out of his den if he have taken nothing?
5. Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth where no gin *is* for him? shall *one* take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all?

6. Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done *it?*
7. Surely the Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the Prophets.
8. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord hath spoken, who can but prophesy?

3. An duo ambulabunt simul nisi inter ipsos conveniat?
4. An rugiet leo in sylva et præda non erit ei? an dabit leo (*vel*, leunculus edet, *vel*, emittet) vocem suam è cubili suo (*vel*, lustro) quum nihil ceperit?
5. An cadet avis super laqueum ad terram absque aucupe (et auceps non erit ei? *ad verbum;*) an tollet auceps laqueum ex terra priusquam capturam ceperit? (*ad verbum*, et capiendo non capiet; *sed ego redidi sensum Prophetæ.*)
6. An clanget tuba in urbe et populus non contremiscet? An erit malum in urbe quod Jehova non fecerit?

7. Quia (*vel*, certè) non faciet Dominator Jehova quidquam nisi revelaverit secretum suum servis suis Prophetis.
8. Leo rugivit, quis non timeat? Dominator Jehova locutus est, quis non prophetet?

The Prophet here accumulates similitudes, which may, however, be reduced to five particulars. He first shows that he uttered no empty words, but had God's authority for what he said; and he appeals to him as his witness and approver: this is one thing. Then he shows that God designedly announces the punishment he would inflict on transgressors, that they might in time repent, and that he does not cry out for no reason, as unreflecting men grow angry for nothing, but that he is driven to anger by just causes, and therefore

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terrifies them by his Prophets. He teaches, thirdly, that nothing happens by chance, that the Israelites might thereby be made to consider more attentively the judgments of God. In the fourth place, he declares that men are extremely stupid, when they are not moved by the threats which they hear proceed from God. He intimates, in the fifth place, that the execution of them was ready to take place, and that when God has denounced anything, his threatenings are not vain, such as those by which children are terrified.

These, then, are the five points, which we shall hereafter notice in their due order. He at the same time confirms what he said at the beginning of the chapter,—that God did not suddenly take vengeance on the Israelites, but called them to repentance, provided they were healable. He had indeed spoken before more distinctly, 'For three transgressions, and for four, I will not be propitious to them:' but now he demands attention from the people of Israel, 'Hear this, ye children of Israel, *Will two* men *walk together, except they agree among themselves?*' By these words he teaches, that though God might have immediately and unexpectedly brought punishment on them, he yet spared them and suspended his judgment, until they repented, provided they were not wholly irreclaimable. Amos now then confirms the truth, that God would not punish the Israelites, as he might justly, but would first try whether there was any hope of repentance.

Let us now come to the first similitude; he asks, *Will two walk together without agreeing?* Some forcibly misapply the Prophet's words, as though the meaning was, that God was constrained to depart from that people, because he saw that they were going astray so perversely after their lusts. The sense, according to these, would be, "Do you wish me to walk with you?" that is, "Do you wish that my blessing should dwell among you, that I should show to you, as usual, my paternal love, and bountifully support you? Why then do ye not walk with me, or, why should there not be a mutual consent? Why do ye not respond to me? for I am ready to walk with you." But this exposition, as ye see, is too strained. There are other two, which are these,—either that the Prophet intimates here, that so many of God's servants did

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not, as it were with one mouth, threaten the Israelites in vain,—or, that the consent of which he speaks was that of God with his Prophets. This last exposition being rather obscure, requires to be more clearly explained. Some, then, take the sense of this verse to be the following,—"I am not alone in denouncing punishment on you; for God has before warned you by other Prophets; many of them still live; and ye see how well we agree together: we have not conspired after the manner of men, and it has not happened by any agreement, that Isaiah and Micah denounce on you what ye hear from my mouth. It is then a hidden accordance, which proceeds from the Holy Spirit." This sense is not unsuitable.

But there is a third equally befitting, to which I have briefly referred, and that is, that the Prophet here affirms that he speaks by God's command, as when two agree together, when they follow the same road; as when one meets with a chance companion, he asks him where he goes, and when he answers that he is going to a certain place, he says, I am going on the same road with you. Then Amos by this similitude very fitly sets forth the accordance between God and his Prophets; for they did not rashly obtrude themselves so as to announce anything according to their own will, but waited for the call of God, and were fully persuaded that they did not by any chance go astray, but kept the road which the Lord had pointed out. This could not indeed have been a sufficiently satisfactory proof of his call; but the Prophet had already entered on his course of teaching; and though nearly the whole people clamoured against him, he yet had given no obscure proofs of his call. He does not then here mention the whole evidence, as though he intended to show that he was from the beginning the Prophet of God; but he only confirms, by way of reproof, what his teaching had before sufficiently attested. Hence he asks, *Will two walk together, except they agree among themselves?* as though he said, "Ye are mistaken in judging of me, as though I were alone, and in making no account of God: ye think me to be a shepherd, and this is true; but it ought to be added, that I am sent by God and endued with the gift of prophecy. Since then I speak by God's Spirit, I do not walk alone;

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for God goes before, and I am his companion. Know then that whatever I bring forward proceeds not from me, but God is the author of what I teach."

This seems to be the genuine meaning of the Prophet: by this similitude he affirms that he faithfully discharged his office, for he had not separated himself from God, but was his companion: as when two agree together to travel the same road; so also he shows that he and God were agreed. If, however, the former interpretation be more approved, I will not dispute the point; that is, that the Prophet here confirms his own doctrine by alleging that he was not alone, but had other colleagues; for it was no common confirmation, when it appeared evident that the other Prophets added their testimony to what he taught. As, however, he does not apply this similitude in this way, I know not whether such was his design: I have therefore brought forward what seems to me to be a simpler view.

The second similitude follows, *Will a lion roar in the forest without a prey? Will a lion send forth his voice from his den when he has caught nothing?* By this verse he intimates that God does not cry out for nothing by his Prophets; for ungodly men supposed that the air was only made to reverberate by an empty sound, when the Prophets threatened, "These," they said, "are mere words;" as though indeed they could not find that the necessity of crying arose from themselves, because they had provoked God by their vices. Hence the Prophet, meeting their objection, says, "If lions roar not, except when they have obtained a prey, shall God cry from heaven and send forth his voice as far as the earth, when there is no prey?" The meaning is, that the word of God was very shamefully despised by the Israelites, as though there was no reason for crying, as though God was trifling with them. His word is indeed precious, and is not thrown heedlessly into the air, as if it were a mere refuse; but it is an invaluable seed. Since the Lord cries, it is not, says Amos, without a lawful cause. How so? The lions do not indeed roar without prey; God then does not cry by his Prophets, except for the best reason. It hence follows that the Israelites were hitherto extremely stupid, inasmuch as

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they did not listen with more earnestness and attention to the teaching of the Prophets, as though God had uttered only an empty sound.

The third similitude now follows, *Will a bird fall on the earth*, he says, *without a fowler?* The Prophet means here that nothing happens without being foreseen by God; for as nets are laid for birds, so God ensnares men by his hidden punishments. Unexpectedly indeed calamity comes, and it is commonly ascribed to chance; but the Prophet here reminds us that God stretches his nets, in which men are caught, though they think that chance rules, and observe not the hand of God. They are deceived, he says; for the bird foresees not the ensnaring prepared for him; but yet he *falls* not *on the earth without the fowler:* for nets weave not themselves by chance, but they are made by the industry of the man who catches birds. So also calamities do not happen by chance, but proceed from the secret purpose of God. But we must observe, that similitudes ought not to be too strictly applied to the subject in hand. Were one to ask, how God could compare himself here to a fowler, as there is craft and artifice employed in catching innocent birds, when nets are laid for them, it would be a frivolous question; for it is evident enough what the Prophet meant, and that the design of his words was to show, that punishments fall on men, and that they are ensnared through the secret purpose of God; for God has long ago foreseen what he will do, though men act heedlessly, as the birds who foresee nothing.

Then it follows, in the fourth place, *Will the fowler remove his snare before he has made a capture?* In this second clause the Prophet intimates that the threatenings of God would not be without effect; for he will execute whatever he declares. It is indeed certain, that fowlers often return home empty, and gather their nets though they have taken nothing; but the Prophet, as I have said, in using these similitudes, only states what fowlers usually do, when they are in hope of some prey. As for instance, when one spreads his nets, he will wait, and will not gather his nets until he takes some prey, if so be that a prey should come; he may indeed wait in vain all night. Then, as fowlers are not wearied, and wish

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not to lose their labour after they have spread their nets, also the Prophet says, that God does not in vain proclaim l threatenings to serve as empty bugbears, but that his n remain until he has taken his prey; which means, that G will really execute what he has threatened by his Prophe The meaning then is, that God's word is not ineffectual, b when God declares any thing, it is sure to be accomplishe and hence he reproves the Israelites for receiving so hee lessly and with deaf ears all God's threatenings, as though was only trifling with them. "It will not be," he says, " you expect; for God will take his prey before he takes up l nets."

He adds, in the last place, *Shall a trumpet sound and people tremble not?* Here he reprehends, as I have said, t torpidity of the people, to whom all threatenings were sport: "When a trumpet sounds," he says, "all trembl for it is a signal of danger. All then either fly for aid stand amazed when the trumpet sounds. God himself cri his voice deserves much more attention than the trump which fills men's minds with dread; and yet it is a sou uttered to the deaf. What then does this prove, but th madness possesses the minds of men? Are they not des tute of all judgment and of every power of reason?" W hence see that the Prophet in these words intended to sho that the Israelites were in a manner fascinated by the de for they had no thought of evils; and though they knew th God sounded the trumpet and denounced ruin, they remained heedless, and were no more moved than if all thin were in a quiet state. What remains I cannot now finish.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou art pleased daily to exhort to repentance, and dost not suddenly execute thy judgment which we might be in an instant overwhelmed, but givest time to seek reconciliation,—O grant, that we may now att to thy teaching, and all thy admonitions and threatenings, become teachable and obedient to thee, lest thou be constrain on finding us hardened against thy threatenings, and wh irreclaimable, to bring on us extreme vengeance: make us t so to submit ourselves to thee in the spirit of teachableness

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obedience, that being placed under the protection of thy Son, we may truly call on thee as our Father, and find thee to be so in reality, when thou shalt show to us that paternal love, which thou hast promised, and which we have all experienced from the beginning, who have truly and from the heart called on thy name, through the same, even Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Fifty-fourth.

In our last Lecture were noticed these words of Amos—that a *whole people tremble at the sound of a trumpet;* he now seems to add a sentence wholly different, and says, *No calamity happens, except through God.* But he had before said what we already noticed respecting the sound of the trumpet, that the people might understand that nothing happens by accident, and that punishments are, for just reasons, inflicted by the Lord; and this he soon after confirms by saying, that God did nothing, without having first revealed his secret to his Prophets. The meaning then is, that the people of Israel were extremely stupid for not having repented after so many warnings; nay, they remained still in their perverseness, though they had been constrained by the most powerful means.

We now then comprehend what the Prophet means; but that the whole subject may be made more clear, let us notice this intervening sentence, *There is no evil in the city which God hath not done.* By these words the Prophet reminds us, that calamities happen not by chance, as the vulgar of mankind believe; for the words, "Prosperous or adverse fortune," are, we know, in the mouths of all, as though God was idle in heaven, and took no care of human affairs. Hence, whatever happens, the world usually ascribes it to fortune. But the Prophet here shows that the government of this world is administered by God, and that nothing happens except through his power. He does not, indeed, treat here of sin: but the Prophet, according to the usual practice, calls whatever is adverse to us, רָעָה, *roe*, evil. Whatever, then, we naturally shun, is usually called an evil; and this mode of speaking Amos follows here, as God is said by Isaiah to have

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in his power night and day, light and darkness, good and evil, (Isa. xlv. 7.) When good and evil are spoken of there, it is certain that what is referred to is prosperity and adversity. So also here, the Prophet teaches that men are chastised by God whenever anything adverse happens to them, as though he said that fortune rules not, as the world imagines, and that things do not take place at random; but that God is at all times the judge of the world. In short, Amos wished to recall the people to an examination of their lives, as though he summoned them to the tribunal of God; and he showed by evident external tokens that God was justly offended with the Israelites: "Ye see that you are severely dealt with, do you think that God sleeps idly in heaven? Since nothing happens but by the will of God, he now designs to awaken you by treating you with so much sharpness and severity, so that you may know your vices." We now then perceive the design of the Prophet in saying, that *there was no evil in the city which God had not done.*

In a similar manner, also, does God by Jeremiah sharply expostulate with the people, because they imputed slaughters in war, famine, and other evils, to fortune. When, therefore, any calamity happened, the Jews complained of bad fortune, as the world are wont to do. God was displeased and severely reproved this profane notion; for the government of the world was thus taken away from him: for, were any thing to take place against his will, so much would be abstracted from his power; and farther, men would grow hardened in their sins; for however grievously he might punish them, they would not yet acknowledge his hand: they might indeed cry out under the strokes, and feel how severe his scourges were; but they would not regard the hand of the striker, which is the principal thing, as it is stated elsewhere, (Isa. ix. 13.) Then the Prophet takes this as granted, that, whenever any calamity happens, men are extremely stupid, if they are not roused and reflect on their sins, and consider the tokens of God's wrath, so as to flee to him, and confess themselves guilty and implore his mercy.

But he had before spoken of the sound of the trumpet; for every excuse was thereby taken away from the Israelites,

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as God had not only recalled them to the right way by his scourges, but also preceded these by his word: and he shows how justly he was displeased with them; hence the Prophet adds another sentence, *For the Lord Jehovah will do nothing without revealing his secret to his servants*, the Prophets. The Prophet declares in this verse, that God dealt not with the Israelites as with heathen nations; for God punished other people without warning them by his word; he summoned to judgment neither the Idumeans, nor the Ammonites, nor the Egyptians, but executed his vengeance, though he never addressed them. Different was his dealing with the Israelites; for God not only brought on them such punishment as they deserved, but he preceded it by his word, and showed beforehand what evil was nigh them, that they might anticipate it; he indeed gave them time to repent, and was ready to pardon them, had they been capable of being restored. Now then the Prophet aggravates the guilt of the people, because they had not only been chastised by the Lord, but they might, if they chose, have turned aside their punishment; instead of doing so, they hardened themselves in their wickedness.

God then will do nothing without *revealing* his secret to his servants, *the Prophets*. This ought to be confined to that people, and it ought also to be confined to the punishments of which the Prophet speaks. It is certain that God executes many judgments, which are hid both from men and angels; and Amos did not intend to impose a necessity on God, as if he was not free to do any thing without previously revealing it; such was not the Prophet's design; but his object was simply to condemn the Israelites for their irreclaimable perverseness and obstinacy, that, having been warned, they did not seriously think of repenting, but despised all God's threatenings, and even scorned them. God then *will do nothing*, that is, "God will not treat you in an ordinary way, as he does with other nations, whom he chastises without speaking to them. They, for the most part, understand not what is done; but God in a paternal manner kindly reminds you of your sins, shows why he resolves to chastise you and forewarns you, that you may have time to seek and ask forgiveness."

God therefore *reveals* his secret to his *Prophets;* that is,

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"He does not suddenly or unexpectedly punish you, as he might do, and as ye see that he does with respect to others; but he proclaims what he will do, and sends his messengers, as though they were heralds sent to denounce war on you; and at the same time they open a way for reconciliation, provided ye are not wholly past recovery, and perverse in your wickedness. Ye are then doubly inexcusable, if God can do nothing by his word and by the punishment which he afterwards subjoins to his word." We now comprehend the object of the Prophet. Then foolish is the question, at least unreasonable, "Does God here bind himself by a certain law, that he will do nothing but what he previously reveals to his Prophets?" For Amos means not this, but only affirms that it was the common method which the Lord adopted in chastising that people. It is certain, that the Prophets did not know many things; for God distributed his Spirit to them by measure: all things then were not revealed to the Prophets. But Amos here only intimates that God did not deal with his chosen people as he did with heathen nations; for these often found God unexpectedly displeased with them, and had no time to reflect, that they might repent. Much more kindly and mercifully has God acted, says Amos, with that people; for God was unwilling suddenly to overwhelm or to surprise them, but has warned them by his Prophets. We see how widely this doctrine opens; but it is enough to understand the Prophet's design, and to know the purpose to which his discourse ought to be applied.

God then will do nothing without revealing first his *secret* to the Prophets. He calls it a secret, because men are perplexed when God executes vengeance on them, and stand amazed: but when they are in time warned, then what God designs becomes evident to them, and they know the cause and the source of punishment. Thus then the secret is revealed, which was hid from miserable men: and the guilt of the people is doubled, when, after these threatenings, they do not repent.

It now follows, *The lion roars, who would not fear? The Lord Jehovah speaks, who would not prophesy?* In this verse the Prophet reproves the Israelites for their usual contentions

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with the Prophets, when their sins were sharply reprehended. Thus indeed are men wont to do; they consider not that Prophets are sent from above, and that there is a charge committed to them. Hence, when Prophets are severe in their words, the world clamours and wrangles: "What do these men intend? Why do they urge us so much? Why do they not allow us to rest quietly? for they provoke against us the wrath of God." Whenever then men are roused, they immediately menace God's Prophets with strife and contention, and regard not threatenings as coming from God himself. This vice the Prophet now condemns: *The lion roars*, he says, *who would not fear? God speaks, who would not prophesy?* "Ye think that I am your adversary; but ye can gain nothing by quarrelling with me: were I silent, the voice of God would of itself be formidable enough. The evil then proceeds not from my mouth, but from God's command; for I am constrained, willing or unwilling, to obey God: he hath chosen me to be a Prophet, and hath showed what he intends that I should proclaim. What can I do, he says? I am not at liberty to invent revelations; but I faithfully bring forth to you what has been delivered to me by the Lord. How great then is your madness, that ye contend with me, and consider not that your strife and contention is with God himself?" We now see what the Prophet meant, and also understand why he adduced the four similitudes, of which we have already spoken. I now proceed with the remaining context.

9. Publish in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and behold the great tumults in the midst thereof, and the oppressed in the midst thereof.

9. Promulgate in palatiis Asdod, et in palatiis terræ Ægypti, et dicite, Congregamini super montes Samaria, et videte tumultus multos (*vel*, concussiones multas) in medio ejus, et oppressiones in medio ejus.

Amos begins here to set judges over the Israelites; for they would not patiently submit to God's judgment: and he constitutes and sets over them as judges the Egyptians and Idumeans. This prophecy no doubt increasingly exasperated the minds of the people, who were already very refractory

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and rebellious; but yet this was necessary. God, indeed, had cited them to his tribunal, as long as a hope of reconciliation remained: when they became angry on account of God's threatenings, clamoured against his servants, yea, and obstinately disputed, as though they were guilty of no fault, what remained, but that God should constitute judges over them, whom the Prophet names, even the Egyptians and Idumeans? "Ye cannot bear my judgment; unbelievers, who are already condemned, shall pronounce sentence upon you. I am indeed your legitimate judge; but as ye have repudiated me, I will prove to you how true my judgment is; I will be silent, the Egyptians shall speak." And who were these Egyptians? Even those who were equally guilty with the Israelites, and laboured under the same charges, or were at least not far from deserving a similar punishment; and yet God would compel the Israelites to hear the sentence that was to be pronounced on them by the Egyptians and Idumeans. We know how proudly the Israelites gloried in their primogeniture; but the Lord here exposes to scorn this arrogance, because they made such bad use of his benefits. We now then perceive the Prophet's intention.

Publish, he says, *in the palaces of Ashdod, in the palaces of the land of Egypt, and say*—what? *Assemble on the mountains of Samaria.* He would have the Egyptians and the Idumeans to meet together, and the mountains of Samaria to be as it were the theatre, though the idea of a tribunal is more suitable to the similitude that is used. It was then, as though the Egyptians and Idumeans were to be seated on an elevated place; and God were to set before them the oppressions, the robberies and iniquitous pillages, which prevailed in the kingdom of Israel. *Assemble* then *on the mountains of Samaria.* The Prophet alludes to the situation of the country: for though Samaria was situated on a plain,[1] there were yet mountains around it; and they thought themselves hid there, and were as wine settled on its lees. God says now, "Let the Egyptians and Idumeans meet and view the scene; I will

[1] This is a mistake; Samaria was situated on a hill, and not on a plain: but there were hills or mountains surrounding it; so that what is said here equally applies to the place.—*Ed.*

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allot them a place, from which they can see how greatly all kinds of iniquity prevail in the kingdom of Israel. They indeed dwell in their plain, and think themselves sufficiently defended by the mountains around; but from these mountains even the very blind will be able to see how abominable and shameful is their condition."

Let them come and *see*, he says, *the oppressions in the midst of her*. The word he uses is מהומת, *meumet*, tumults; but he means oppressions, committed without any regard to reason or justice, when all things are done with clamour and violence. "Let them see then the oppressions, let them see the distresses." He speaks of their deeds; he afterwards mentions the persons; but the Prophet means the same thing, though he uses different forms of expression, that is, that the kingdom of Israel was filled with many crimes; for plunder of every kind prevailed there, and men kept within no bounds of moderation, but by tumult and clamour pillaged the poor and the miserable. It now follows—

10. For they know not to do right, saith the Lord, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.

10. Et non noverunt facere rectum, dicit Jehova, thesaurizantes rapinam et prædam in palatiis suis.

In this verse he confirms what I have already said of oppressions: he says that they despised every thing right. But not to know this, lessens not their guilt, as though they ignorantly offended; but the Prophet means, on the contrary, that they had cast away far from them every thing that was just, and allowed themselves all liberty in sinning, without any discrimination, without any shame; as though he said, "They are brute animals, who are void of all judgment, of all reason, and of all shame; for they seek not to have a right understanding any more." Here then he accuses the Israelites of wilful blindness; for they hardened themselves in every evil, and extinguished all judgment, shame and reason, so that they no longer distinguished between what was just and unjust: and he mentions one thing in particular—that they accumulated much wealth by plunder and robbery. The Israelites were no doubt guilty of many other crimes; but by stating a part for the whole, he mentions one thing which includes

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other things, and intimates, that the people were wholly given to all kinds of crimes, and that as they had cast aside every shame, obliterated every distinction, and repudiated every regard for justice, they abandoned themselves to every kind of wickedness. This is the import of the Prophet's words.

But our Prophet points out here the gross sins of the Israelites, because he had previously constituted the blind as their judges. Hence it was the same as though he had said, "Though the Egyptians and the Idumeans are void of light, yet your iniquity is so palpable, that they will be able to perceive it. There is indeed no necessity of any subtle disputation, since plunders and pillages are carried on with so much violence, since no moderation or equity is any longer observed, and no shame exists; but men rush headlong with blind impetuosity into every kind of evil; so that the very blind, though without eyes, can know what your state is. Then the Egyptians and Idumeans will perceive your vices, when located on the neighbouring mountains." This is the meaning. It now follows—

11. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, An adversary *there shall be* even round about the land; and he shall bring down thy strength from thee, and thy palaces shall be spoiled.

12. Thus saith the Lord, As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus in a couch.

11. Propterea sic dicit Dominus Jehova, Adversarius et quidem in circuitu terræ, et tollet abs te robur tuum et diripientur palatia tua.

12. Sic dicit Jehova, Quemadmodum eripit pastor ex ore leonis duo crura vel externam partem auris, sic eripientur filii Israel qui habitant in Samaria in angulo lecti, et in Damasco tanquam in grabato.

The Prophet here announces the punishment God would inflict on the Israelites. *An enemy*, he says, *and indeed one around you, &c.*: Some think צַר, *tsar*, to be a verb in the imperative mood; but this cannot be maintained. But Amos here declares that an enemy was near the Israelites, who would besiege them on every side. The ungodly are ever wont to seek escapes, and if they see the smallest hole, they think that they can escape. Strange is the presumption of men with regard to God: when they see themselves hemmed in,

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they are really frightened, yea, they become wholly disheartened; but yet they seek subterfuges on the right hand and on the left, and never submit to God except when constrained. This is the reason why the Prophet now says, that *an enemy* was near, *and indeed around* them; as though he said, "You have no reason to think that there is any way of escape open to you; for God has hemmed you in on every side; there is therefore a siege which so confines you, that you in vain hope to escape." *An enemy*, he says, is indeed around—*around the whole land, who will take away from thee thy strength.* Here the Prophet removes from the Israelites their vain confidence; for they could not think of God's vengeance, while looking on their own power. They indeed thought that they had sufficient protection in their own large number, riches, and arms, as men are wont to set up against God what proceeds from himself, as though creatures could do anything against him, and as though God could not take away, when he pleases, what he has given: and yet such is the blindness of men. Hence the Prophet says, that all the wealth and all the strength in which the Israelites excelled would be useless, inasmuch as an *enemy*, he says, armed by God, *shall take from thee thy strength; and thy palaces shall be plundered.*

In the next verse he leaves some hope, though this is not avowedly done. For when he says that some would be saved, as when a shepherd snatches from the jaws of a lion the ear of a sheep or two legs, it is not the Prophet's design to mitigate the severe judgment of which he had before spoken; but shows, on the contrary, that when any should be saved, it would not be because the people would defend themselves, or were able to resist; but that it would be as when a trembling shepherd snatches some small portion of a spoil from the lion's mouth. We must bear in mind what I have just said of the proud confidence of the people; for the Israelites thought that they were safe enough from danger; and therefore despised all threatenings. But what does Amos say? "Think not," he says, "that there will be any defence for you, for your enemies will be like lions, and there will be no more strength in you to resist them than in sheep, when not only wolves, but lions, seize them and take them as their prey." When any

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thing is then saved, it is as it were by a miracle; the shepherd may perhaps take a part of the ear or two legs from the lion's mouth when he is satisfied. The shepherd dares not to contend with the lion; he always runs away from him: but the lion will have his prey and devour it at his pleasure; when he leaves a part of the ear or two legs, the shepherd will then seize on them, and say, "See, how many sheep have been devoured by lions:" and these will be the proofs of his loss. So now the Prophet says, "The Lord will expose you as a prey to your enemies, and their rapacity will not be less dreaded by you than that of a lion: in vain then ye think yourselves defended by your forces; for what is a sheep to a lion? But if any part of you should remain, it will be like an ear or a leg: and still more,—as when a lion devours a sheep, and leaves nothing after having taken his prey until he is satisfied, so shall it happen to you."

They are then mistaken who think that the preceding commination is here designedly mitigated; for the Prophet does not do this, but continues the same subject, and shows that the whole people would become a prey, that their enemies would be like lions, and that they would have no strength to resist. Some hope, I indeed allow, is here given to the people; for, as it has been before seen, God intended that there should ever be some remnant as a seed among that chosen people. This, I admit, is true: but we must yet regard what the Prophet treats of, and what he had in view. He then did not intend here expressly to console the Israelites; though incidentally he says, that some would remain, yet his object was to show that the whole kingdom was now given up as a prey to lions, and that nothing would be saved except a very small portion, as when a shepherd carries away an ear when the wolves and lions had been satiated. It follows—

13. Hear ye, and testify in the house of Jacob, saith the Lord God, the God of hosts,

14. That in the day that I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him, I will also visit the altars of Bethel: and the horns of the altar shall be cut off and fall to the ground.

13. Audite et testificamini in domo Jacob, dicit Dominus Jehova, Deus exercituum,

14. Quia die quo visitabo scelera Israel super ipsum, etiam visitabo super altaria Bethel: et scindentur cornua altaris et cadent ad terram.

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Amos, I have no doubt, added this passage, to show that the superstitions, in which he knew the Israelites falsely trusted, would be so far from being of any help to them, that they would, on the contrary, lead them to ruin, because the people were by them provoking God's wrath the more against themselves. When the Israelites heard that God was offended with them, they looked on their sacrifices and other superstitions, as their shield and cover: for thus do hypocrites mock God. But we know that the sacrifices offered at Bethel were mere profanations; for the whole worship was spurious. God had indeed chosen to himself a place where he designed sacrifices to be offered. The Israelites built a temple without any command, nay, against the manifest prohibition of God. Since then they had thus violated and corrupted the whole worship of God, strange was their madness to dare to obtrude on God their superstitions, as though they could thus pacify his displeasure! The Prophet then rebukes now this stupidity, and says, *In the day* when God *shall visit the sins of* Israel, he will inflict punishment on the *altars of Bethel.* By the sins, which the Prophet mentions, he means plunder, unjust exactions, robbery, and similar crimes; for there prevailed then, as we have seen, among the people, an unbridled cruelty, avarice, and perfidiousness.

Hence he says now, When God *shall visit the sins* of Israel; that is, when he shall punish avarice, pride, and cruelty; when he shall execute vengeance on pillages and robberies, he shall then visit also the altars of Bethel. The Israelites thought that God would be propitious to them while they sacrificed, though they were wholly abandoned in their lives: they indeed thought that every uncleanness was purified by their expiations; and they thought that God was satisfied while they performed an external worship. Hence, when they offered sacrifices, they imagined that they thus made a compact with God, and presented such a compensation, that he dared not to punish their sins. "Their own fancy greatly deceives them," says Amos. For, as we know, this was, at the same time, their principal sin,—that they rashly dared to change the worship of God, that they dared to build a temple without his command; in short, that they had violated the

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whole law. God then will begin with superstitions in executing judgment for the sins of the people. We now then understand the Prophet's design in saying, that God would visit the altars of Bethel when inflicting punishment on the sins of Israel.

But as it was difficult to produce conviction on this subject, the Prophet here invites attention, *Hear ye, and testify*, he says, *in the house of Jacob*. Having bidden them to hear, he introduces God as the speaker: for the Israelites, as we know they were wont to do, might have pretended that Amos had, without authority, threatened such a punishment. "Nothing is mine," he says. We then see the design of this address, when he says, *Hear:* he shows God to be the author of this prophecy, and that nothing was his own but the ministration. *Hear ye*, then, *and testify in the house of Jacob*. By the word *testify*, he seals his prophecy, that it might have more weight, that they might not think that it was a mere mockery, but might know that God was dealing seriously with them, Then *testify ye in the house of Jacob*. And for the same purpose are the titles which he ascribes to God, *The Lord Jehovah*, he says, *the God of hosts*. He might have used only one word, "Thus saith Jehovah," as the Prophets mostly do; but he ascribes dominion to him, and he also brings before them his power,—for what end? To strike the Israelites with terror, that vain flatteries might no longer, as heretofore, take possession of them; but that they might understand, that so far were they from doing anything towards pacifying God's wrath by their superstitions, that they thereby the more provoked him.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that inasmuch as we so provoke thee daily by our sins, that we are worthy of eternal destruction, and no good remains in us, and though we are severely chastised with temporal punishments, thou dost not yet take from us the hope of that mercy, which thou hast promised in thy Son to those who truly and from the heart repent and call on thee as their Father,—O grant, that being touched with the sense of our evils, we may, in true humility, and with the genuine feeling of penitence, offer ourselves as a sacrifice to thee, and seek pardon

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with such groaning, that having undergone temporal punishments, we may finally enjoy that grace, which is laid up for all sinners, who truly and from the heart turn to thee, and implore that mercy which has been prepared for all those who really prove themselves to be the members of thine only begotten Son. Amen.

Lecture Fifty-fifth.

ONE thing escaped me yesterday: pain in my head prevented me to look on the book. The Prophet says in the twelfth verse, that the children of Israel would be so delivered as when a shepherd rescues only an ear, or some part of a sheep: he adds, So the children of Israel *shall be rescued who dwell in Samaria in a corner of a bed, and at Damascus on a couch.* This similitude I did not explain. Some think that Damascus is here compared with Samaria, as the more opulent city; for Jeroboam the Second had extended the limits of his kingdom to that city, and subdued some portion of the kingdom of Syria: they then suppose, that Samaria is called a corner of a bed on account of its confined state, and Damascus a couch; but there is no reason for this. He might have better called Damascus a bed. Others give this exposition, "They who shall escape among the people of Israel, shall not be the valiant and the brave, who will oppose the attack of the enemy, or with arms in hand defend themselves; but those shall be safe who will hide themselves and flee to their beds." But the Prophet seems here to compare Damascus and Samaria to beds for this reason, because the Israelites thought that they would find in them a safe receptacle: "Though, then, ye dwell at Samaria and Damascus, as in a safe nest, it will yet be a miracle if a few of you will escape; it will be as when a shepherd carries away the ear of a sheep, after the lion has satiated himself." This seems to be the genuine meaning of the Prophet; for I doubt not but that he derides the foolish confidence in which the Israelites indulged themselves, thinking that they were secure from all danger when shut up within the gates of Samaria or of Damascus. "Ye think that these nests will be safe for

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you; but lions shall break through, and hardly one in a hundred, or in a thousand, shall in a corner of a bed escape; it will be as when a lion leaves an ear or part of a leg." Let us now proceed—

15. And I will smite the winter-house with the summer-house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith the Lord.

15. Et percutiam domum hyemalem cum domo æstiva, et peribunt domus eburneæ et deficient domus magnæ, dicit Jehova.

Amos shows again that in vain the great people trusted in their wealth and fortified places; for these could not hinder God from drawing them forth to punishment. As then abundance blinds men, and as they imagine themselves to be as it were inaccessible, especially when dwelling in great palaces, the Prophet here declares, that these houses would be no impediment to prevent God's vengeance to break through; *I will* then *destroy the winter-house together with the summer-house.* Amos no doubt intended by this paraphrase to designate the palaces. The poor deem it enough to have a cottage both for winter and summer; for they change not the parts of their buildings, so as to inhabit the hotter in winter, and to refresh themselves in the colder during summer: no such advantage is possessed by the poor, for they are content with the same dwelling through life. But as the rich sought warmth in winter, and had their summer compartments, the Prophet says, that their large and magnificent buildings would be no protection to the rich, for God's vengeance would penetrate through them; *I will destroy* then *the winter with the summer house.*

And then he says, *Fail shall the houses of ivory.* We now see more clearly that the Prophet speaks here against the rich and the wealthy, who inhabited splendid and magnificent palaces, *Perish* then *shall the houses of ivory, and fail shall the great houses;* some say, *many* houses, but improperly; for the Prophet continues the same idea; and as he had before mentioned houses of ivory, so he now calls them great houses; for they were not only built for use and convenience, like common and plebeian houses, but also for show and display;

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for the rich, we know, are ever lavish and profuse, not only in their table and dress, but also in their palaces. This is the meaning. Now follows—

CHAPTER IV.

1. Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that *are* in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink.

1. Audite verbum hoc vaccæ Basan, qui estis in monte Samariæ, quæ opprimitis pauperes, quæ conteritis egenos, quæ dicitis dominis eorum, Affer et bibemus.

He who divided the chapters seems not to have well considered the Prophet's argument: for he pursues here his reproof of the rich, and he had been prophesying against the chief men in the kingdom of Israel. We indeed know how much ferocity there is in the rich, when they become formidable to others by their power. Hence the Prophet here laughs to scorn their arrogance: *Hear*, he says, *this word;* as though he said, "I see how it will be; for these great and pompous men will haughtily despise my threatenings, they will not think themselves exposed to God's judgment; and they will also think that wrong is done to them: they will inquire, 'Who I am,' and ask, 'How dares a shepherd assail them with so much boldness?'" *Hear* then, *ye cows;* as though he said, that he cared not for the greatness in which they prided themselves. "What then is your wealth? It is even fatness: then I make no more account of you than of cows; ye are become fat; but your power will not terrify me; your riches will not deprive me of the liberty of treating you as it becomes me and as God has commanded me." We hence see that the Prophet here assails with scorn the chief men of the kingdom, who wished to be sacred and untouched. The Prophet asks by what privilege they meant to excuse themselves for not hearing the word of the Lord. If they pleaded their riches and their own authority; "These," he says, "are fatness and grossness; ye are at the same time cows, and I will regard you as cows; and I will not deal with you less freely than I do with my cattle." We now then perceive the Prophet's intention.

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But he goes on with his similitude: for though he here accuses the chiefs of the kingdom of oppressing the innocent and of distressing the poor, he yet addresses them in the feminine gender, *who dwell*, he says, *on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who consume the needy, who say, &c.* He does not think them worthy of the name of men; and yet they wished to be viewed a class separate from the common people, as though they were some heroes or half-gods. The Prophet, by way of contempt, calls them here cows; and he also withholds from them the name of men. Bashan, we know, derived its name from fatness; it was a very rich mountain, and celebrated for its pastures: as the fertility of this mountain was well known among that people, the Prophet gave the name of the cows of Bashan to those fat and full men: and it was right that they should be thus roughly handled, because through fatness, as it is usually the case, they had contracted dulness; for when men abound in riches, when they become great in power, they forget themselves and despise God, for they think themselves beyond the reach of danger. As then this security makes the rich torpid and inattentive to any threatenings, and disobedient to God's word, so that they regard all counsels superfluous, the Prophet here rebukes them with greater asperity, and addresses them, by way of reproach, under the name of cows. And when he says that they were on the mountain of Samaria, this is still ironical; for they might have made this objection, that they dwelt in the royal city, and were watchful over the state of the whole nation, and that the kingdom stood through their counsels and vigilance: "I see how it is," he says; "Ye are not on mount Bashan, but on the mount of Samaria; what is the difference between Samaria and Bashan? For ye are there inebriated with your pleasures: as cows, when fattened, are burdened with their own weight, and can hardly draw along their own bodies; so it is with you, such is your slowness through your gluttony. Samaria then, though it may seem to be a watch-tower, is yet nothing different from mount Bashan: for ye are not there so very solicitous (as ye pretend) for the public safety; but, on the contrary, ye devour great riches; and as your cupidity is insatiable, the

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whole government is nothing else to you than fatness or a rich pasturage."

But the Prophet chiefly reproves them, because they oppressed the poor and consumed the needy. Though the rich, no doubt, did other wrongs, yet, as they especially exercised cruelty towards the miserable, and those who were destitute of every help, this is the reason why the Prophet here states expressly that the poor and the needy were oppressed by the rich: and we also know, that God promises special aid to the miserable, when they find no help on earth; for it more excites the mercy of God, when all cruelly rage against the distressed, when no one extends to them a helping hand or deigns to aid them.

He adds, in the last place, what they say to *their masters.* I wonder why interpreters render this in the second person, "who say to *your* masters;" for the Prophet speaks here in the third person: they seem therefore designedly to misrepresent the real meaning of the Prophet; and by masters they understand the king and his counsellors, as though the Prophet here addressed his words to these chief men of the kingdom. Their rendering then is unsuitable. But the Prophet calls those masters who were exactors, to whom the poor were debtors. The meaning is, that the king's counsellors and judges played into the hands of the rich, who plundered the poor; for when they brought a bribe, they immediately obtained from the judges what they required. They are indeed to be bought by a price who hunt for nothing else but a prey.

They said then to *their masters, Bring and we shall drink;* that is, "Only satiate my cupidity, and I will adjudge to thee what thou wouldest demand: provided then thou bringest me a bribe, care not, I will sell all the poor to thee." We now comprehend the design of the Prophet: for he sets forth here what kind those oppressions were of which he had been complaining. "Ye then oppress the poor,—and how? Even by selling them to their creditors, and by selling them for a price. Hence, when a reward is offered to you, this satisfies you: Ye inquire nothing about the goodness of the cause, but instantly condemn the miserable and the innocent, because

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they have not the means of redeeming themselves: and the masters, to whom they are debtors, who through your injustice hold them bound to themselves, pay the price: there is thus a mutual collusion between you." It now follows—

2. The Lord God hath sworn by his holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fish-hooks.

2. Juravit Dominus Jehova per sanctuarium suum, quia ecce dies veniunt super vos, et tollet vos in clypeo (*vertunt quidam; alii*, in hamo,) et residuum vestrum in spina piscationis.

Here Amos declares what sort of punishment awaited those fat cattle, who being well fed despised God, and were torpid in their fatness. He therefore says, that the days were nigh, when they should be taken away together with all that they had, and all their posterity, as by a hook of a fisher.

But to give more effect to his commination, he says that God *had sworn by his sanctuary*. The simple word of God ought indeed to have been sufficient: but as we do not easily embrace the promises of God, so also hypocrites and the reprobate are not easily terrified by his threatenings; but they laugh to scorn, or at least regard as empty, what God's servants declare. It was then necessary that God should interpose this oath, that secure men might be more effectually aroused.

The Lord then *hath sworn by his sanctuary*.[1] It is singular that God should swear by his temple rather than by himself: and this seems strange; for the Lord is wont to swear by himself for this reason,—because there is none greater by whom he can swear, as the Apostle says, (Heb. vi. 16.) God then seems to transfer the honour due to himself to stones and wood; which appears by no means consistent. But the name of the temple amounts to the same thing as the name of God. God then says that he had sworn by the sanctuary, because he himself is invisible, and the temple was his osten-

[1] This word is commonly rendered 'holiness,' though it is also used to denote 'the sanctuary.' Calvin has been blamed for taking it here in the latter sense. What induced him to do so is evident from his comment: and when we consider all the circumstances of the passage, we may perhaps be disposed to think him right.—*Ed.*

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sible image, by which he exhibited himself as visible: it was also a sign and symbol of religion, where the face of God shone forth. God did not then divest himself of his own glory, that he might adorn with it the temple; but he rather accommodated himself here to the rude state of men; for he could not in himself be known, but in a certain way appeared to them in the temple. Hence he swore by the temple.

But the special reason, which interpreters have not pointed out, ought to be noticed, and that is, that God, by swearing by his sanctuary, repudiated all the fictitious forms of worship in which the Israelites gloried, as we have already seen. The meaning is this,—"God, who is rightly worshipped on mount Zion, and who seeks to be invoked there only, swears by himself; and though holiness dwells in himself alone, he yet sets before you the symbol of his holiness, the sanctuary at Jerusalem: he therefore repudiates all your forms of worship, and regards your temples as stews or brothels." We hence see that there is included in this expression a contrast between the sanctuary, where the Jews rightly and legitimately worshipped God, and the spurious temples which Jeroboam built, and also the high places where the Israelites imagined that they worshipped him. We now then understand what is meant by the words, that God *sware by his sanctuary.*

And he sware by his sanctuary, that *the days would come,* yea, were *nigh,* in which they should be *taken away with hooks,* or with shields. צנה, *tsane,* means in Hebrew to be cold:[1] but צנות, *tsanut,* denotes shields in that language, and sometimes fishing-hooks. Some yet think that the instrument by which the flesh is pulled off is intended, as though the Prophet still alluded to his former comparison. But another thing, which is wholly different, seems to be meant here, and that is, that these fat cows would be drawn out as a little fish by a hook; for afterwards he mentions a thorn or a hook again. It is the same as though he had said, "Ye are indeed of great weight, and ye are very heavy through your fatness; but this your grossness will not prevent God from quickly

[1] It is once applied in Prov. xxv. 13, to denote the piercing cold of snow; but its ideal meaning seems to be, pointed, piercing, penetrating: hence it means a thorn, a goad, and also a fishing-hook.—*Ed.*

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taking you away, as when one draws out a fish by a hook." We see how well these two different similitudes harmonize: "Ye are now trusting in your own fatness, but God will draw you forth as if ye were of no weight at all: ye shall therefore be dragged away by your enemies, not as fat cows, but as small fishes, and a hook will be sufficient, which will draw you away into remote lands." This change ought to have seriously affected the Israelites, when they understood that they would be stripped of their fatness and wealth, and then taken away as though they were small fishes, that a hook was enough, and that there would be no need of large waggons. It follows—

3. And ye shall go out at the breaches, every *cow at that which is* before her; and ye shall cast *them* into the palace, saith the Lord.

3. Et per rupturas exibitis unaquæque coram se (coram facie sua,) et projicietis vos ab excelso (*vel*, ex palatio,) dicit Jehova.

The Prophet expresses now, in different words, what would be the future calamity of that kingdom; but he still speaks of the rich and the chief men. For though he threatened also the common people and the multitude, it was not yet needful expressly to name them, inasmuch as when God fulminates against the chief men, terror ought surely to seize also the humbler classes. The Prophet then designedly directs his discourse still to the judges and the king's counsellors, *Ye shall go forth at the breaches, every one of you.* We see that he continues as yet the same mode of speaking, for he counts not those pompous and haughty masters as men, but still represents them as cows, *Every one*, that is, every cow, he says, *shall go forth through the breaches over against it.* We know how strictly the rich observe their own rank, and also how difficult it is to approach them. But the Prophet says here, that the case with them would be far different: "There will not be," he says, "a triple wall or a triple gate to keep away all annoyances, as when ye live in peace and quietness; but there will be breaches on every side, and every cow shall go forth through these breaches; yea, *shall throw herself down from the very palace:* neither the pleasures, nor the indulgence, in which ye now live, shall exist among you

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any more; no, by no means, but ye will deem it enough to seek safety by flight. Each of you will therefore rush headlong, as when a cow, stung by the gadfly or pricked by goads, runs madly away." And we know how impetuous is the flight of cows. So also it will happen to you, says the Prophet. We now then perceive the import of the words.

Some take הַרְמוֹנָה, *ermune*, for Armenia, because the Israelites were led away into that far country; and others take it for the mount Amanus; but for this there is no reason. I do not take it, as some do, as meaning, "In the palace," but, on the contrary, "From the palace," or, from the high place. *Ye shall* then *throw yourselves down from the palace;* that is, "Ye shall no more care for your pomps and your pleasures, but will think it enough to escape the danger of death, even with an impetuosity like that of beasts, as when cows run on headlong without any thought about their course."

It was not without reason that he repeated the name of God so often; for he intended to shake off from the Israelites their self-complacencies; inasmuch as the king's counsellors and the judges, as we have already stated, were extremely secure and careless; for they were in a manner stupified by their own fatness. It follows—

4. Come to Bethel and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgressions; and bring your sacrifices every morning, *and* your tithes after three years:

5. And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim *and* publish the free-offerings; for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord God.

6. And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.

4. Ite in Bethel et sceleratè agite, in Gilgal adjicite sceleratè agendum, et adducite manè sacrificia vestra, ad tres dies (*hoc est*, tertio anno) decimas vestras;

5. Et adolete è fermento laudem et adducite voluntarias oblationes, publicite; quia sic vobis libuit, filii Israel, dicit Adonai Jehova.

6. Atque etiam ego dedi vobis mundiciem dentium (*alii vertunt*, obtusiones, *sed malè*) in omnibus oppidis vestris, et penuriam panis in omnibus regionibus vestris; et non estis reversi usque ad me, dicit Jehova.

The Prophet here again pours contempt on the perverse confidence, in which the Israelites were become hardened. They thought, indeed, that their worship was fully approved

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by God, when they offered sacrifices in Bethel and Gilgal. But the Prophet here shows, that the more sedulously they laboured in performing sacred things, the more grievously they offended God, and the heavier judgment they gained for themselves. "What do you obtain by wearying yourselves, when ye so strictly offer sacrifices, and omit nothing that is prescribed in the law of God? Only this—that you provoke God's wrath more and more." But he condemns not the Israelites for thinking that they rendered a compensation, as hypocrites were wont to think, and were on this account often reproved by the Prophets; but he denounces their modes of worship as vicious and false, and abominable before God. The Prophets reprobated sacrifices for two reasons;—first, because hypocrites brought them before God as a compensation, that they might escape the punishment they deserved, as though they paid God what they owed. Thus at Jerusalem, in the very temple, they profaned the name of God; they offered sacrifices according to what the law prescribed, but disregarded the true and legitimate end; for they thought that God was pacified by the blood of beasts, by incense, and other external rites: it was therefore a preposterous abuse. Hence the Prophets often reproved them, inasmuch as they obtruded their sacrifices on God as a compensation, as though they were real expiations for cleansing away sins: this, as the Prophets declared, was extremely puerile and foolish. But, secondly, Amos now goes much farther; for he blames not here the Israelites for thinking that they discharged their duty to God by external rites, but denounces all their worship as degenerate and perverted, for they called on God in places where he had not commanded: God designed one altar only for his people, and there he wished sacrifices to be offered to him; but the Israelites at their own will had built altars at Bethel and Gilgal. Hence the Prophet declares that all their profane modes of worship were nothing but abominations, however much the Israelites confided in them as their safety.

This is the reason why he now says, *Go ye to Bethel.* It is the language of indignation; God indeed speaks ironically, and at the same time manifests his high displeasure, as though he had said, that they were wholly intractable, and could

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not be restrained by any corrections, as we say in French, *Fai du pis que tu pouvras.* So also God speaks in the 20th chapter of Ezekiel, 'Go, sacrifice to your idols.' When he saw the people running headlong with so much pertinacity into idolatry and superstitions, he said, "Go;" as though he intended to inflame their minds. It is indeed certain, that God does not stimulate sinners; but he thus manifests his extreme indignation. After having tried to restrain men, and seeing their ungovernable madness, he then says, "Go;" as though he said, "Ye are wholly irreclaimable; I effect nothing by my good advice; hear, then, the devil, who will lead you where you are inclined to go: *Go* then *to Bethel, and there transgress; go to Gilgal, and transgress there again;* heap sins on sins."

But how did they transgress at Bethel? Even by worshipping God. We here see how little the pretence of good intention avails with God, which hypocrites ever bring forward. They imagine that, provided their purpose is to worship God, what they do cannot be disapproved: thus they wanton in their own inventions, and think that God obtains his due, so that he cannot complain. But the Prophet declares all their worship to be nothing else than abomination and execrable wickedness, though the Israelites, trusting in it, thought themselves safe. "Add, then, to transgress in Gilgal; and offer your sacrifices in the morning; be thus diligent, that nothing may be objected to you, as to the outward form."

After three years,[1] that is, in the third year, *bring also* your *tenths;* for thus it was commanded, as we read in Deut. xiv. Though, then, the Israelites worshipped God apparently in the strictest manner, yet Amos declares that the whole was vain and of no worth, yea, abominable before God, and that the more they wearied themselves, the more they kindled the wrath of God against themselves. And to the same purpose

[1] Literally, "on the third of days," לשלשת ימים: but days here are evidently for years. "I cannot doubt," says Dr Henderson, "but that the Prophet has in view the enactment recorded in Deut. xiv. 29, xxvi. 12. ימים, *days*, mean here, as in Lev. xxv. 29, Judges xvii. 10, the fullest complement of days, *i. e., a year.*"—*Ed.*

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is the next verse, *And burn incense with the leaven of thank-offering.* He speaks of peace-offerings; sacrifices of thanksgiving were wont to be offered with leaven; but with other sacrifices they presented cakes and unleavened bread. It was lawful in peace-offerings to offer leaven. However sedulous, then, the Israelites were in performing these rites, the Prophet intimates that they were in no way approved by God, inasmuch as they had departed from the pure command of the law. Some take leaven in a bad sense, as meaning a vicious and impure sacrifice, which the law required to be free from leaven; but this view seems not suitable here; for nothing is here condemned in the Israelites, but that they had departed from what the law prescribed, that they had presumptuously changed the place of the temple, and also raised up a new priesthood. They were in other things careful and diligent enough; but this defection was the chief abomination. It could not then be, that God would approve of depravations; for obedience, as it is said elsewhere, is of more account before him than all sacrifices, (1 Sam. xv. 22.) Proclaim, he says, נדבות, *nudabut*, voluntary oblations. What he means is, "Though ye not only offer sacrifices morning and evening, as it has been commanded you, though ye not only present other sacrifices on festivals, but also add voluntary oblations to any extent, yet nothing pleases me."

Bring forth then, *and proclaim voluntary offerings;* that is, "Appoint solemn assemblies with great pomp; yet this would be nothing else than to add sin to sin: ye are acting wickedly for this reason,—because the very beginning is impious."

But the last part of the verse must be noticed, *For so it hath pleased you, O children of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah.* By saying that the Israelites loved to do these things, he reprobates their presumption in devising at their own will new modes of worship; as though he said, "I require no sacrifices from you except those offered at Jerusalem; but ye offer them to me in a profane place. Regard then your sacrifices as offered to yourselves, and not to me." We indeed know how hypocrites ever make God a debtor to themselves; when they undertake any labour in their frivolous ceremonies, they think that God is bound to them. But God

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denies that this work was done for him, for he had not enjoined it in his law. "It hath thus pleased you," he says, "*Vous faites cela pour votre plaisir et bien mettez le sur vos comptes.*" We then see what Amos meant here by saying, 'It hath so pleased you, O children of Israel:' it is as if he had said, "Ye ought to have consulted me, and simply to have obeyed my word, to have regarded what pleased me, what I have commanded; but ye have despised my word, neglected my law, and followed what pleased yourselves, and proceeded from your own fancies. Since, then, your own will is your law, seek a recompense from yourselves, for I allow none of these things. What I require is implicit submission, I look for nothing else but obedience to my law; as ye render not this but according to your own will, it is no worship of my name."

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou wouldest have our life to be formed by the rule of thy law, and hast revealed in it what pleaseth thee, that we may not wander in uncertainty but render thee obedience,—O grant, that we may wholly submit ourselves to thee, and not only devote our life and all our labours to thee, but also offer to thee as a sacrifice our understanding and whatever prudence and reason we may possess, so that by spiritually serving thee, we may really glorify thy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Fifty-sixth.

But I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your borders; and ye turned not to me, saith Jehovah. God here expostulates with the people on account of their incurable perverseness; for he had tried to restore them to the right way, not only by his word, but also by heavy punishments; but he effected nothing. This hardness doubled the guilt of that people, as they could not be subdued by God's chastisements.

The Prophet now says, that the people had been chastised with famine, *I gave them*, he says, *cleanness of teeth.* It

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is a figurative expression, by which Amos means want, and he explains it himself by *want of bread.* The whole country then laboured under want and deficiency of provisions, though the land, as it is well known, was very fruitful. Now since the end of punishment is to turn men to God and his service, it is evident, when no fruit follows, that the mind is hardened in evil. Hence the Prophet shows here, that the Israelites were not only guilty, but had also pertinaciously resisted God, for their vices could be corrected by no punishment. We have just mentioned famine, another kind of punishment follows—

7. And also I have withholden the rain from you, when *there were* yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered.

7. Atque etiam ego prohibui à vobis pluviam, quum adhuc essent tres menses ad messem; et plui super urbem unam, et super alteram urbem non feci pluere; pars una compluebatur, et super quam non pluebat exaruit.

I have said that another kind of punishment is here recorded by the Prophet; it is not, however, wholly different: for whence comes the want we have noticed, except through drought? For when God intends to deprive men of support, he shuts up heaven and makes it iron, so that it hears not the earth, according to what we have noticed elsewhere. Yet these words of the Prophet are not superfluous; for God would have the punishment he inflicts on men to be more attentively considered. When men are reduced to want, they will indeed acknowledge it to be the curse of God, except they be very stupid; but when a drought precedes, when the earth disappoints its cultivators, and then a want of food follows, more time is given to men to think of God's displeasure. This is the reason why the Prophet now distinctly speaks of rain being withheld, after having said that the people had been before visited with a deficiency of provisions; as though he said, "Ye ought to have returned, at least after a long course of time, to a sound mind. If God had been offended with you only for one day, and had given tokens of his displeasure, the shortness of time might have been some excuse for you: but as the earth had become dry; as God

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had restrained rain, and as hence sterility followed, and afterwards there came want, how great was your stupidity not to attend to so many and so successive tokens of God's wrath?" We now perceive why the Prophet here connects drought with want of food, the cause with the effect: it was, that the stupidity of the people might hence be more evident.

But he says that God had *withheld rain from them, when three months still remained to the harvest.* When it rains not for a whole month, the earth becomes dry, and men become anxious, for it is an ill omen: but when two months pass without rain, men begin to be filled with apprehension and even dread; but if continual dryness lasts to the end of the third month, it is a sign of some great evil. The Prophet, then, here shows that the Israelites had not been in an ordinary way chastised, and that they were very stupid, as they did not, during the whole three months, apply their minds to consider their sins, though God urged them, and though his wrath had been manifested for so long a time. We now then see that the hardness of the people is amplified by the consideration of time, inasmuch as they were not awakened by a sign so portentous, *When there were yet three months,* he says, *to the harvest, I withheld rain from you.*

Another circumstance follows, God *rained on one city, on another he did not rain; one part was watered, and no drop of rain fell on another.* This difference could not be ascribed to chance: except men resolved to be wilfully mad, and to reject all reason, they must surely have been constrained to confess these to have been manifest signs of God's wrath. How came it, that one place was rained upon, and another remained dry? that two neighbouring cities were treated so differently? Whence was this, except that God appeared angry from heaven? The Prophet then does here again condemn the obstinacy of the people: they did not see in this difference the wrath of God, which was yet so very conspicuous. The import of the whole is, that God shows that he had to do with a people past recovery; for they were refractory and obstinate in their wickedness, and could bear the application of no remedy. It follows—

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8. So two *or* three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water; but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.

8. Et venerunt duæ tres urbes ad unam urbem, ut biberent aquas, et non satiatæ sunt: et non reversi estis usque ad me, dicit Jehova.

Marking the difference, the Prophet relates, that two or three cities had come to one, to seek drink, and that they were not satisfied, because the waters failed on account of so large a number: for though the fountains could have supplied the inhabitants, yet when such a multitude flowed from every quarter, the very fountains became exhausted. The Prophet thus aggravates the punishment brought by God on the Israelites; for so great was the thirst, that whole cities had recourse to fountains, where they heard that there was any water. It was indeed an unusual thing for inhabitants to leave their own city and to run to another to seek water, like wild beasts, who, when satiated with prey, run far for water: but it is an unwonted thing for men to undertake a long journey for the sake of finding drink: for they dig wells for themselves, and seek water by their own industry, when rivers do not flow, or when fountains do not supply them with drink. When therefore men are forced to leave their own homes and to seek water at a distance, and when they exhaust the fountains, it is a portend which ought to be observed.

But how was it that the Israelites took no notice of God's hand, which was then as it were visible? Hence then, as they repented not, their obstinate blindness became quite evident. They were no doubt terrified with fear and harassed by grief; but all this produced no effect, for they continued in their sins, took delight in their own superstitions, and pursued the same life as before. Since then they divested not themselves of their own character, nor ceased to provoke continually the wrath of God, their hopeless and incorrigible obstinacy is here manifestly proved. This was the Prophet's design. It follows—

9. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens, and

9. Percussi vos Orientali vento et rubigine; magnos[1] hortos

[1] The words are, הרבות גנותיכם, "the abundance of your gardens,"

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your vineyards, and your fig-trees, and your olive-trees, increased, the palmer-worm devoured *them:* yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.

vestros et vites vestros et ficulneas vestras et oliveta vestra voravit bruchus (*vel,* eruca;) et non reversi estis usque ad me, dicit Jehova.

Though one kind of punishment may not convince men, they are yet thereby proved with sufficient clearness to be guilty before God. But when in various ways he urges them, and after having tried in vain to correct them in one way, he has recourse to another, and still effects nothing, it hence more fully appears that they, who are thus ever unmoved, and remain stupid, whatever means God may adopt to lead them to repentance, are altogether past recovery. This is the drift of what the Prophet now adds: he says that they had *been smitten by the east wind.* He shows that want of food does not always proceed from one cause; for men become hardened when they feel only one evil: as the case is, when a country labours under a drought, it will be thought to be as it were its fate. But when God chastises men in various ways, they ought then no doubt to be touched and really affected: when, on the contrary, they pass by all punishments with their eyes closed, it is certain, that they are wholly obstinate, and so fascinated by the devil, that they feel nothing and discern nothing. This is the reason why the Prophet records the various punishments which had been already inflicted on the people.

Hence he says now, that they had been smitten by the east wind, *and by the mildew.* What mischief the mildew does to the standing corn, we know; when the sun rises after a cold rain, it burns out its substance, so that the ears grow yellow, and rottenness follows. God then says, that the standing corn of the people had been destroyed by this blasting, after dryness had already prevailed, though not through the whole land in an equal degree; for God rained on one part, while a neighbouring region was parched through want of

and not your great or large gardens. I would thus render the verse—

I smote you with blight and with mildew;
The abundance of your gardens and of your vineyards,
And your figs and your olives, the locust devoured;
Yet ye turned not to me, saith Jehovah.—*Ed.*

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rain: the Prophet having stated this, now mentions also the mildew.

He says further, that *the fig-trees* and *vines* had been consumed, that the *gardens* had been destroyed, and that the *olive-trees* had been devoured by *chafers* or palmerworms. Since then the Israelites had been in so many ways warned, was it not a strange and monstrous blindness, that being affrighted they could bear these chastisements of God, and be not moved to return to the right way? If the first chastisement had no effect, if the second also had been without fruit, they ought surely at last to have repented; but as they proceeded in their usual course, and continued like themselves in that contumacy of which we have spoken, what any more remained for them, but to be wholly destroyed as those who had trifled with God? We now then understand what the Prophet means.

Moreover, this passage teaches, as other similar passages do, that seasons vary not by chance; that now drought prevails, and then continual rains destroy the fruits of the earth, that now chafers are produced, and then that heaven is filled with various infections,—that these things happen not by chance, is what this passage clearly shows: but that they are so many tokens of God's wrath, set before our eyes. God indeed does not govern the world, according to what profane men think, as though he gave uncontrolled license both in heaven and earth; but he now withholds rain, then he pours it down in profusion; he now burns the corn with heat, then he temperates the air; he now shows himself kind to men, then he shows himself angry with them. Let us then learn to refer the whole order of nature to the special providence of God. I mention his special providence, lest we should dream only of some general operation, as ungodly men do: but let us know that God would have himself to be seen in daily events, so that the tokens of his love may make us to rejoice, and also that the tokens of his wrath may humble us, to the end that we may repent. Let this then be learnt from the present words of the Prophet.

Amos further teaches us, that wind and rain, hail and drought, heat and cold, are arms or weapons, by which God executes vengeance on account of our sins. Whenever God then intends to inflict punishment on us, he puts on his

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armour, that is, he sends either rain, or wind, or drought, or heat, or hail. Since it is so, let us not think that either rain or heat is fortuitous, or that they depend on the situation of the stars, as ungodly men imagine. Let us therefore know, that all nature so obeys God's command, that when rain falls seasonably, it is a token of his love towards us, and that when it is unseasonable, it is a proof of his displeasure. It is meet to think the same of heat and of cold, and of all other things. Let us now go on with the words of the Prophet—

10. I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.

10. Misi in vos pestem secundum rationem Ægypti; percussi gladio robustos vestros, cum captivitate equorum vestrorum; ascendere feci fœtorem castrorum vestrorum et ad nares vestras (*vel*, usque ad nares vestras, *ut copula supervacua sit*;) et non reversi estis usque ad me, dicit Jehova.

God now expostulates with the people, because their perverseness had not been subdued even by additional punishments; for he had in vain exhorted and stimulated them to repentance. He says, that they had been smitten with *pestilence*. The Prophet has hitherto spoken only of the sterility of the land, and of the fruit being destroyed by infections; he has hitherto mentioned want only with its causes; this only has been stated: but now he adds that the people had been afflicted with pestilence, and also with war, and that they had still persevered in their wickedness. Whatever measures then God had adopted to correct the vices of the people, the Prophet now complains and deplores, that they all had been tried in vain. But so many upbraidings are mentioned, that God might show that there was no more any hope of pardon, inasmuch as they thus continued to be untractable and perverse.

He then says that he had *sent pestilence according to the manner of Egypt*. דרך, *darec*, means a way, but is taken for mode or manner, as the 10th chapter of Isaiah, 'I will smite him according to the manner of Egypt,' says God, speaking of Sennacherib, as though he said, "Ye know how

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formerly I checked the fury of Pharaoh; I will now put on the same armour, that I may drive far from you your enemy Sennacherib." But the Prophet says here, that God had exercised towards the Israelites the same extreme rigour which he had used towards the Egyptians; as though he said, "I have been forced by your obstinacy to turn my power against you: ye know how Egypt was formerly smitten by me from kindness to your fathers; I then showed how dear to me was your preservation, by putting forth my strength to destroy the Egyptians: how is it that I now turn my weapons against you for your destruction? I have been indeed always ready to oppose your enemies, and kindly to cherish you in my paternal bosom. As then ye are become to me like the Egyptians, how is this, and whence this change, except that ye have constrained me by your irreclaimable wickedness?"

We now then see why the Prophet speaks here expressly of the Egyptians. He intimates that God could not show favour to the Israelites, which he would have continued to show, had they not closed the door against it; as though he said, "I had chosen you from other nations; but now I chastise you, not as I do the uncircumcised Gentiles, but I avowedly carry on war with you, as though ye were Egyptians." We see how much it serves for amplification, when Amos compares the Israelites to the Egyptians, as though he had said, that they, by their perverse wickedness, had extinguished all God's favour, so that the memory of their gratuitous adoption was of no more avail to them. *I have* therefore *sent among you pestilence after the manner of Egypt.*

And he adds, *I slew with the sword your strong* men. It was a different kind of punishment, that all the strong had been slain, that their horses had been led into captivity, and that, finally, the fœtor of dead bodies had ascended to suffocate them. These were certainly unusual tokens of God's wrath. As the people had not repented, it became now again quite evident, that their diseases were not healable; for God had effected nothing by the application of so many remedies. These different kinds of punishments ought to be carefully noticed, because the Lord has collected them together, as so many arguments to prove the contumacy of the people.

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By saying that *the fœtor of camps had ascended to their nostrils*, it was the same as if he had said, "There has been no need of external force; though no enemy had been hostile to you, ye have yet been suffocated by your own fœtor; for this came up from your own camps into your nostrils, and deprived you of life. Since God then had raised up this intestine putridity, ought you not to have been at length seriously affected, and to have returned to a right mind? Inasmuch then as no fruit followed, who does not see, that you have been in vain chastised, and that what alone remains for you is utter destruction? As God has hitherto stimulated you in vain by punishments, were he to proceed, he would lose all his labour. Since then God has hitherto to no purpose visited you with his scourges, there is no reason why he should chastise you more moderately: you must now then be utterly destroyed." This is the meaning: and he further adds—

11. I have overthrown *some* of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.

11. Subverti vos secundum subversionem Dei contra (*vel*, in) Sodomam et Gomorrham; et fuistis quasi torris ereptus ab incendio: et non reversi estis ad me, dicit Jehova.

Amos proceeds further, and says, that God had used a severity towards his chosen people similar to that which formerly he showed towards Sodom and Gomorrah. That, we know, was a memorable evidence of God's wrath, which ought to have filled all ages with dread, as it ought also at this day: and Scripture, whenever it graphically paints the wrath of God, sets Sodom and Gomorrah before our eyes. It was indeed a dreadful judgment, when God destroyed those cities with fire from heaven, when they were consumed, and when the earth, cleaving asunder, swallowed up the five cities. But he says that nearly the same ruin had taken place among the people of Israel, only that a few escaped, as when any one snatches a brand from the burning; for the second clause of the verse ought no doubt to be taken as a modification; for had Amos only said, that they had been overthrown as Sodom and Gomorrah, he would have said too

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much. The Prophet then corrects or modifies his expression by saying, that a few had remained, as when one snatches a brand from the burning. But in the meantime, they ought to have been at least moved by punishments so grievous and dreadful, since God had manifested his displeasure to them, as he did formerly to Sodom and Gomorrah.

History seems, at the same time, to militate against this narrative of Amos; for he prophesied under Jeroboam the second, the son of Joash; and the state of the people was then prosperous, as sacred history records. How then could it be, that the Israelites had been destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah? This difficulty may be easily solved, if we attend to what sacred history relates; for it says, that God had pity on the Israelites, because all had been before consumed, the free man as well as the captive, (2 Kings xiv. 25, 26.) When, therefore, there was so deplorable a devastation among the people, it was God's purpose to give them some relief for a time. Hence he made king Jeroboam successful, so that he recovered many cities; and the people flourished again: but it was a short prosperity. Now Amos reminds them of what they had suffered, and of the various means by which God had stimulated them to repentance, though they proved wholly untameable.

Then these two things are in no way inconsistent,—that the Israelites had been consumed before God spared them under Jeroboam,—and that they had yet been for a time relieved from those calamities, which proved ruinous both to the captive and to the free, as it is expressly declared. We must, at the same time, remember, that there was some residue among the people; for it was God's design to show mercy on account of his covenant. The people were indeed worthy of complete destruction; but it was God's will that some remnant should continue, lest any one should think that he had forgotten his covenant. We hence see why God had preserved some; it was, that he might contend with the wickedness of the people, and show that his covenant was not wholly void. So the Lord observed a middle course, that he might not spare hypocrites, and that he might not abolish his covenant; for it was necessary for that to stand

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perpetually, however ungodly and perfidious the Israelites may have been. The Prophet then shows, that God had been faithful even in this case, and constantly kept his covenant, though all the Israelites had fallen away from him. He at length concludes—

12. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: *and* because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

13. For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what *is* his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The Lord, The God of hosts, is his name.

12. Propterea sic faciam tibi Israel; et quia hoc faciam tibi, præpara te in occursum Dei tui Israel.

13. Quia ecce formans montes, creans spiritum (*aut*, ventum,) annuntians homini quæ sit cogitatio ejus, faciens auroram, tenebras (et tenebras, *subaudienda est copula*,) ambulans super excelsa loca terræ, Jehova, Deus exercituum, nomen ejus.

Amos here declares, in the person of God, that the people in vain hoped for pardon, or for a modification, or an abatement, or an end to their punishment; for God had in vain made the attempt, by many scourges and chastisements, to subdue their extreme arrogance: *therefore*, he says, *thus will I do to you*. What does this particle כֹּה, *ke*, *thus*, mean? Some think that God here denounces on the Israelites the punishments they had before experienced: but the Prophet, I doubt not, means something much more grievous. He now removes the exception which he lately mentioned, as though he had said, that God would execute extreme punishment on this reprobate people without any mitigation. *Thus will I do to thee, Israel:* "Thou hast already perceived with how many things I armed myself to take vengeance on the despisers of my law; I will now deal more severely with thee, for thy obstinacy compels me. Since, then, I have hitherto produced no effect on you, I will now bring the last punishment: for remedies cannot be applied to men past recovery." *Thus*, then, he says, *will I do to thee, Israel.*[1]

And because I will do this to thee, &c. עֵקֶב, *okob*, means often a reward or an end: this place may then be thus ren-

[1] There seems to be a reference in "thus" to the judgment denounced on Israel in the 2d and 3d verses of this chapter: he declares that he will deal with Israel "thus," or in the manner before described.—*Ed.*

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dered: 'I will at length surely do this to you;' but the sense the most suitable seems to be this, *Because I will this do to you, prepare to meet thy God.* The passage may be explained in two ways: either as an ironical sentence, or as a simple and serious exhortation to repentance. If we take it ironically, the sense will be of this kind, "Come, now, meet me with all your obstinacy, and with whatever may serve you; will you be able to escape my vengeance by setting up yourselves against me, as you have hitherto done?" And certainly the Prophet, in denouncing final ruin on the people, seems here as though he wished designedly to touch them to the quick, when he says, "Meet now thy God and prepare thyself:" that is, "Gather all thy strength, and thy forces, and thy auxiliaries; try what all this will avail thee." But as in the next chapter, the Prophet exhorts again the Israelites to repentance, and sets before them the hope of favour, this place may be taken in another sense, as though he said, "Since thou seest thyself guilty, and also as thou seest that thou art seeking subterfuges in vain, being not able by any means to elude the hand of thy judge, then see at last, that thou *meet thy God*, that thou mayest anticipate the final ruin which is impending." The Prophets, we indeed know, after having threatened destruction to the chosen people, ever moderate the asperity of their doctrine, as there were at all times some remnant seed, though hidden. And similar passages we have seen both in Joel and in Hosea. It is not, therefore, improper to explain the words of Amos in this sense,—that though the people were almost past hope, he yet exhorted them to anticipate God's wrath. *Prepare* then *thyself to meet thy God*, as though he said, "However worthy thou art of being destroyed, and though the Lord seems to have closed up the door of mercy, and despair meets thee on every side, thou canst yet mitigate God's wrath, provided thou preparest to meet him."

But this preparation includes real renovation of the heart: it then takes place, when men are displeased with themselves, when with a changed mind they submit to God, and humbly pray for forgiveness. There is then an important

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meaning in the Prophet's words, *Prepare thyself.* With regard to meeting God, we know what Paul says in 1 Cor. ix., 'If we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged by the Lord.' How comes it, then, that God deals severely with us, except that we spare ourselves? Hence this indulgence, with which we flatter ourselves, provokes God's wrath against us. We cannot then meet God, except we become our own judges, and condemn our sins and feel real sorrow. We now see what the Prophet means, if we regard the passage as not spoken ironically.

But that he might rouse careless men more effectually, he then magnificently extols the power of God; and that he might produce more reverence and fear in men, especially the hardened and the refractory, he adorns his name with many commendations. As it was difficult to turn the headstrong, the Prophet accumulates many titles, to move the people, that they might entertain reverence for God. "God," he says, "has formed the mountains, and created the spirit," and further, "he knoweth hearts, and men themselves understand not what they think of, except as far as God sets before them their thoughts; God maketh the morning and the darkness, and walketh in the high places of the earth; and his name is, Jehovah, God of hosts." Why were all these encomiums added, but that the hearts of men might be touched, who were before void of thought and sunk in blind stupidity? We now understand the Prophet's object. But what remains to be said on the words will be added in to-morrow's lecture.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since by thy word thou kindly invitest us to thyself, we may not turn deaf ears to thee, but anticipate thy rod and scourges; and that when, for the stupidity and thoughtlessness by which we have become inebriated, thou addest those punishments by which thou sharply urgest us to repent,—O grant, that we may not continue wholly intractable, but at length turn our hearts to thy service and submit ourselves to the yoke of thy word, and that we may be so instructed by the punishments, which thou hast inflicted on us and still inflictest, that we may truly and from the heart turn to thee, and offer ourselves to thee as a sacrifice, that thou mayest govern

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us according to thy will, and so rule all our affections by thy Spirit, that we may through the whole of our life strive to glorify thy name in Christ Jesus thy Son our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Fifty-seventh.

We have explained the last verse of the fourth chapter, except that there remains something to be said of the glorious representation given of God by the Prophet. He says first, that he had *formed the mountains*, then that he had *created the spirit*, afterwards that he *declares to man what is his thought*, *makes the morning and the darkness*, and *walks on the high places of the earth*. Such an accumulation of words might seem superfluous, only this main thing must be borne in mind, that it was necessary for men, whose minds were exceedingly torpid, to be aroused, that they might seriously consider what we have seen had been denounced on them. Hence the Prophet sought to shake off from the Israelites their thoughtlessness, by setting God before them in his greatness; for when his name only is announced, he is wholly neglected by the greatest part of men. It was therefore necessary that something should be added, that they who were asleep might be awakened, and understand how great and how fearful the power of God is. This is the design of all that we read here.

The word רוח, *ruch*, is interpreted in two ways. Some refer it to the wind, and others to the soul of man. If we take it for the wind, it will join suitably with the creation of mountains, for the winds emerge from them on account of their cavity. If you understand it of man's soul, it will agree with the following clause. It appears to me more probable that the Prophet speaks of man's soul; though one may possibly choose to connect both, so that there is an allusion to wind, and that yet Amos, about to speak of thought, first mentions the spirit.

But what the Prophet says, that *God announces to men what their thought is*—this is done in various ways. We indeed know that the end of teaching is, that men may confess their guilt, who before flattered themselves; we know

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also that the word of God is like a two-edged sword, which penetrates into the bones and marrow, and distinguishes between thoughts and feelings, (Heb. iv. 12.) God then thus draws men out of their recesses into the light; and he also convinces them without the word; for we know how powerful are the secret movements (*instinctus*—influences) of the Spirit. But the Prophet meant only here, that the Israelites had to do with God, who is the searcher of hearts, and from whom nothing is hid, however concealed it may be. Each one is to himself the best witness of his own thoughts; but the Prophet ascribes to God a higher degree, for he understands whatever any one conceives in his mind, better than he who seems to have all his own thoughts well understood. Since men therefore craftily hide themselves, the Prophet here reminds them that they cannot succeed, for God understands what they inwardly think better than they themselves. We now then perceive what he substantially means.

Some explain the words, that God *makes the morning darkness*, as if Amos had said, that he converts light into darkness; but we ought rather to consider a copulative to be understood;[1] for he here declares the power of God, not only as displayed in once creating the world, but also in preserving the order of nature, and in minutely regulating the changes of times and seasons. Let us now proceed to the fifth chapter.

CHAPTER V.

1. Hear ye this word which I take up against you, *even* a lamentation, O house of Israel.	1. Audite verbum hoc quod ego tollo super vos, lamentum domus Israel.

Some render the verse thus, "Hear ye this word, because upon you, or for you, I raise a lamentation:" but we shall hereafter speak more at large as to the proper rendering.

[1] This conjecture is fully borne out by the fact, that the copulative ו, *vau*, is found in more than twenty MSS., as given by Kennicott: it is also found in the Septuagint.—*Ed.*

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Let us see what the subject is. The Prophet here denounces on the Israelites the punishment they had deserved; and yet they did not think that it was nigh; and they ferociously despised, I have no doubt, the denunciation itself, because no change had as yet taken place, which might have pointed out such a destruction. Hence the Prophet and his threatenings were both despised.

He however threatens them here in severe terms with the judgment of God, which they feared not: and this is the reason why he says, *Hear ye*. It was not, indeed, without reason that he thus began and intimated that they greatly flattered themselves, nay, that they stopped their ears against wholesome counsels: the admonition would have been otherwise superfluous. The Prophet then indirectly reproves that supine indifference in which the Israelites indulged themselves.

But with regard to the words, some, as I have before mentioned, refer this lamentation to Amos himself, as though he had said, that he lamented the state of the people, finding that they were so stupid, and did not perceive how dreadful the wrath of God is. Since, then, they thus flattered themselves in their sins, those interpreters think that the Prophet here assumes the character of a mourner for that irreclaimable people. *Hear*, he says, *this word*, even because I lament over you. For the more refractory the people were, the more touched with grief the Prophet no doubt was: for he saw how horrible the judgment of God was, which was nigh them, on account of their stubbornness. No wonder then that the Prophet says here, that he undertook or raised lamentation for the people; and this mode of speaking is common in Scripture.

But yet I rather think that another sense is more suitable to this place, which becomes evident by putting in an exegetic particle, *Hear ye* then *this word which I raise upon you*, even *a lamentation*, &c. The word משא, *mesha*, rendered burden, is derived from the verb נשא, *nusha*, which means to raise up: and there is a striking allusion to the subject treated of here. For the Prophet does not here simply teach the people, nor comfort them, nor does he only warn them, but he de-

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nounces on them the last punishment. We hence see the import of the expression, *to raise up a word;* it was the same as though he said, "I lay on you this prophecy:" for a burden is laid on the shoulders of men when God's wrath is denounced.

It afterwards follows, Even *a lamentation, O house of Israel;* which means, "I raise upon you a word, which will constrain you to mourn and lament: though now ye are so refractory against God, that ye spurn all warnings, and reject all threatenings; yet this word shall at last prove mournful to you." This seems to be the genuine sense of the Prophet: in the first place, he reproves the stupidity of the people of Israel, by demanding a hearing; then he reproves their contempt of God in despising all threatenings; and he shows also that this prophecy would prove mournful to them for having so long trifled with God, "The lament of the house of Israel shall be this word, which I now raise up upon you." It follows—

2. The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is forsaken upon her land; *there* is none to raise her up.

2. Cecidit nec adjiciet ut resurgat virgo Israel: relicta est super terram suam; non est qui attollat.

This was substantially the vengeance which was now nigh the Israelites, though they rested securely, and even scorned all the threatenings of God. *The virgin of Israel,* he says, *has fallen.* Expounders have too refinedly explained the word virgin; for they think that the people of Israel are here called a virgin, because God had espoused them to himself, and that though they ought to have observed spiritual chastity towards God, they yet abandoned themselves to all kinds of pollutions: but a virgin, we know, is a title given for the most part by the Prophets to this or that people on account of their delicacies; for Babylon, no less than Samaria or the people of Israel, is called a virgin. Certainly this refined interpretation cannot be applied to Babylon, to Egypt, to Tyre, and to other places. I have therefore no doubt but the Prophet here arraigns the Israelites, because they, relying on their strength, indulged themselves. They were quiet in

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their own retreats, and when all kinds of blessings abounded, they lived daintily and sumptuously. As then they were indulging themselves in such pleasures, he calls them a virgin. *The virgin of Israel* then *has fallen, and shall no more rise again.*

A condition may be here included, as an exhortation to repentance immediately follows: we may then fitly regard this as being understood, "except they timely repent:" otherwise the Israelites must have fallen without hope of restoration. But we may also refer this to the body of the people: fallen then had the virgin of Israel, not so however that they were all destroyed, as we shall hereafter see; for the Prophet says that the tenth part would remain: but this is rightly said of the people generally; for we know that the kingdom had so fallen, that it never afterwards did rise. A remnant of the tribe of Judah did indeed return to Jerusalem; but the Israelites are at this day dispersed though various parts of the world; yea, they are hid either in the mountains of Armenia, or in other regions of the East. Since then what the Prophet here denounces has been really fulfilled as to the whole kingdom, we may take the place without supposing any thing understood, "Fallen hath the virgin of Israel." For as God showed mercy when the people as a body were destroyed, that some remained, is what does not militate with the prophecy, that the whole body had fallen. *Fallen* then *has the virgin of Israel, nor will she any more rise again;* that is, the kingdom shall not by way of recovery be restored; and this, we know, has never taken place.

Forsaken is she, he says, *on her own land, and there is none to raise her up;* which means, that she will continue fallen: though she may remain in her own place, she will not yet recover what she had lost. We now understand the Prophet's meaning; and, at the same time, we see that that people had so fallen, as never to rise again, as it has been stated, into a kingdom. Let us now proceed—

3. For thus saith the Lord God, The city that went out *by* a thousand shall leave an hundred, and that which went forth *by* an hun-	3. Quia sic dicit Dominus Jehova, Urbs è qua egrediebantur mille, manebunt in ea centum; et è qua egrediebantur centum, manebunt

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dred shall leave ten, to the house of Israel.

(*ad verbum*, restabunt) decem domui Israel.

The Prophet now expresses more clearly what he had before said,—that the kingdom would perish, and yet so that the Lord would preserve some remnants. Then, as to the body of the people, Israel had fallen; but as to a few remnants, they were saved; but they were a small number, such as the Prophet mentions. We hence see that some hope of mercy was given to God's chosen people, and that in the meantime destruction was denounced on the whole nation. We have already seen that their wickedness was past hope; it was therefore necessary to announce to them the sentence of final ruin; but it was so done, as not to drive to despair the faithful few, who remained hid among the multitude.

The city then, from which a thousand went forth, shall have *a hundred* remaining; and the city *from which went forth a hundred*, shall have *ten*. Armies were wont formerly to be decimated, when any sedition had been made: but God threatens the Israelites here with a much heavier judgment, —that only the tenth part would be saved from ruin. We now then perceive the design of the Prophet. Now this could not alleviate the grief of the people; but the hypocrites were more exasperated, on hearing that few would be saved, and that all hope of deliverance was cut off from them. When, therefore, they saw that God dealt with them with so much severity, envy increased their grief, and more embittered their minds; and this was what the Prophet designed; for it was of no use to apply any solace to the despisers of God: but as God knew that there were some seed remaining among the people, he intended to provide for the miserable, who would have been a hundred times swallowed up with grief, had no mitigation been offered them. The Prophet then directs his discourse to the few, when he says, "In the city from which a thousand had gone forth, there will be a hundred; and in that from which a hundred went forth, ten will remain alive." It now follows—

4. For thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live.

4. Quia sic dicit Jehova domui Israel, Querite me, et vivetis.

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5. But seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beer-sheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nought.

6. Seek the Lord, and ye shall live; lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour *it*, and *there be* none to quench *it* in Bethel.

5. Et ne quæratis Bethel, et in Gilgal ne eatis, et ne transeatis in Berseba; quia Gilgal migrando migrabit, et Bethel erit in nihilum (*vel*, in molestiam.)

6. Quærite Jehovam et vivetis; ne transeat (*vel*, scindat) quasi ignis domum Joseph, et absorbeat, et non sit extinguens in Bethel.

Amos here again exhorts the Israelites to repentance; and it was an address common to all, though the greater part, as we have said, were altogether past recovery; but it was necessary, as long as they continued a chosen people, to call them to repentance; for they had not been as yet abdicated. We further know, that the Prophets preached in order to invite some to God, and to render others inexcusable. With regard to the end and design of public teaching, it is, that all should in common be called: but God's purpose is different; for he intends, according to his own secret counsel, to draw to himself the elect, and he designs to take away all excuse from the reprobate, that their obstinacy may be more and more apparent. We must further bear in mind, that while the people of Israel continued, the doctrine of repentance and faith was preserved among them; and the reason was that to which I have alluded, because they remained as yet in the fold of God. It is no wonder then that the Prophet gives again to the Israelites the hope of pardon, provided they repented.

Thus saith Jehovah to the house of Israel, Seek me, and ye shall live. This sentence has two clauses. In saying, *Seek me*, the Prophet exhorts the Israelites to return to a sane mind: and then he offers them the mercy of God, if only they sought from the heart to reconcile themselves to him. We have elsewhere said, that men cannot be led to repentance, unless they believe that God will be propitious to them; for all who think him to be implacable, ever flee away from him, and dread the mention of his name. Hence, were any one through his whole life to proclaim repentance, he could effect nothing, except he were to connect with this the doctrine of faith, that is, except he were to show that God is

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ready to give pardon, if men only repent from the heart. These two parts, then, which ought not to be separated, the Prophet here connects together very wisely and for the best reason, when he says, *Seek me, and ye shall live;* intimating that the gate of mercy was still open, provided the Israelites did not persevere in their obstinacy. But, at the same time, he lays this to their charge,—that they wilfully perished through their own fault; for he shows that in themselves was the only hinderance, that they were not saved; for God was not only ready to receive them into favour, but also anticipated and exhorted them, and of his own free will sought reconciliation. How then was it, that the Israelites despised the salvation offered to them? This was the madness which he now charges them with; for they preferred ruin to salvation, inasmuch as they returned not to God when he so kindly invited them, *Seek me, and ye shall live.* The same thing is stated in another place, where it is said, that God seeketh not the death of a sinner, (Ezek. xviii. 32.)

But as we have already said, the Prophets spoke thus in common to all the people, but their doctrine was not to all efficacious; for the Lord inwardly attracted his elect, and others were rendered inexcusable. But still this is true, that the whole blame, that they perished, were in the children of Israel, for they refused the salvation offered to them. What indeed was the cause of their destruction, but their own obstinacy? And the root of the evil, was it not in their own hearts? Then none of them could evade the charge made against them by the Prophet,—that they were the authors of their own ruin, for each of them must have been conscious of his own perverseness.

But Amos afterwards defines the character of true repentance, when he says, *Seek not Bethel, go not to Gilgal, pass not over to Beersheba.* Some think that the Prophet here repudiates all the disguises, which are usually pretended by hypocrites. We indeed know that when God calls such men to himself, that they seek indirect and tortuous courses; for none of them return sincerely and willingly to God. Men indeed see that they are justly reproved for having departed from God: but when they are called back to him, they take

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a circuitous course, as I have said, and not the straight road. Thus, though they pretend to seek God, they seek subterfuges, that they may not present themselves to him. All this is no doubt true; but the Prophet advances farther; for he shows here, that the Israelites by going to Bethel not only lost all their labour, but also grievously offended God; for superstition was in itself condemnable. If Amos had preached at Jerusalem, he might have said, "Go not into the temple, for in vain ye offer sacrifices;" as indeed he does say hereafter, "Come not with your flock." For he there shows, that God is not to be pacified by ceremonies; nay, in that very chapter, he rejects feast-days and sacrifices; but in this place he ascends higher, and says, that these two things are wholly contrary—to seek God, and to seek Bethel; as though he said, "If ye from the heart return to me, renounce all the superstitions to which you have been hitherto attached."

It is indeed a proof of true conversion, when the sinner is displeased with himself on account of his sins, and hates the things which before pleased him, and with a changed mind devotes himself wholly to God. It is of this that the Prophet now treats; as though he said, "If there is in you a purpose to return to God, cast away all your superstitions; for these two things—true religion and idolatry, cannot be joined together. As long then as ye remain fixed in that false worship to which you have accustomed yourselves, ye continue alienated from God. Then reconciliation with him demands that you bid adieu to all your corrupt forms of worship." The import of the whole then is this,—that the Israelites could not be reconciled to God, except they departed from their superstitions. "Let them turn away," he says, "*from Bethel, and Gilgal, and Beersheba.*"

We indeed know that the calves were made at Bethel; and Gilgal, no doubt, became celebrated for the passing of the people over Jordan, and also, as it is well known, for the circumcising of the children of Abraham; and as to Beersheba, we know that Abraham dwelt there for a long time, and frequently offered sacrifices to God. Now, this vicious zeal (κακοζηλία—evil zeal or affectation) ever prevails in the world; without reason or judgment it lays hold on something

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special, when it undertakes to set up the worship of God, as we see to be the case under the Papacy. But God has prescribed to us a certain rule according to which he is to be worshipped; it is not then his will that there should be a mixture of our inventions. When therefore the posterity of Abraham presumptuously availed themselves of his example, and when they extolled the memorable event of the circumcision, God repudiated all contrivances of this kind; for as it was well known, it was expressly his will to be worshipped at Jerusalem; and by appointing one tabernacle and one altar, he designed to cherish unity and concord among the people. We now then understand that it was the intention of Amos to show, that the conversion of the people would be fictitious, until they turned away from all the superstitions and vicious modes of worship, in which they had habituated themselves: hence, *Seek not Bethel, come not to Gilgal, pass not over to Beersheba.*

The same thing may be said at this day to those who wish to blend the dregs of the Papacy with the pure and holy worship of God; for there are at this day many go-betweens, (*mediatores,*) who, while they see that our doctrine cannot be disapproved of, yet wish to contrive some middle course; that is, they wish to reconcile Popery with the doctrine of the Gospel. But the Prophet shows that such a mixture cannot be endured by God. How so? Because light cannot agree with darkness. Hence, corruptions, except they be abolished, will always subvert the true worship of God. We now see, that the lesson conveyed by this doctrine is, that the pure worship of God cannot be restored while the corruptions of the world, which are contrary to his word, prevail.

Come not then *to Gilgal, for by migrating it shall migrate.* There is an alliteration in the words of the Prophet, "Gilgal by rolling shall be rolled;" for Gilgal means rolling. Were such a phraseology allowable, it would be this, "Gilgal by gilling shall be gilled;" that is, it shall be rolled with quick rolling. God intimates that this place, under the protection of which the Israelites thought themselves safe, would be destroyed, as it had been already destined for destruction. *Gilgal* then *by migrating shall migrate;* not that the place

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could remove, but that it would be wholly demolished, so that nothing should remain there but dreadful tokens of God's vengeance.

He then adds, *Seek Jehovah, and ye shall live.* This repetition is not superfluous: the Prophet confirms what I have already stated, that such was the opposition between the true and legitimate worship of God, and idolatry and superstition, that the people of Israel, as long as they retained their corruptions, proved that they had nothing to do with God, whatever they may have pretended with their mouths and by their ceremonies. *Seek God,* he says, *and ye shall live;* and this repetition was very useful for this end, that hypocrites might know that they were justly condemned, inasmuch as they did not consecrate themselves wholly to God; for they were ever ready to contend with God whenever they could. "Why does God deal so strictly with us? why does he not concede to us at least something? for we do not deny him every thing. But if we do what we think to be right, why does he not indulge us at least on this account?" But when God not only urges hypocrites by his doctrine, but visits them also with punishment, then they become angry, and even raise a clamour. Hence the Prophet, the second time, calls them to this duty, *Seek Jehovah, and ye shall live;* as though he said, "Ye will gain nothing by evasion; for if any one seeks God truly and from the heart, God will not disappoint him; he will receive him into favour and will bless him. That ye then pine away in your calamities, impute this to your own obstinacy and stubbornness: it is so, because ye do not truly seek God; for while ye retain your corruptions, as I have said before, ye do not seek him."

But he adds, *Lest he pass on like a fire.* צלח, *tselach,* means to pass on, to advance; it means also to break out, and sometimes to prosper; but, in this place, the Prophet no doubt meant what I have said. Then it is, *Lest he advance like fire upon the house of Joseph and consume it, and there be none to extinguish it in Bethel.* The kind of vengeance which God threatened is not here expressed, but it may be easily understood. There is, therefore, in the meaning no obscu-

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rity; for he declares, that if the Israelites hardened their hearts against God, a burning was nigh at hand, which would seize on them, devour, and consume them. There shall come then, or shall *advance, a fire upon the house of Joseph;* some say, *shall burst out,* which amounts to the same thing. By the house of Joseph is meant Ephraim; for he was, we know, the second son of Joseph; and, by taking a part for the whole, the Prophets usually include the ten tribes, as it is well known, when they mention Ephraim; and the kingdom of Israel is sometimes called the house of Joseph. *Lest* then *he ascend as fire into the house of Joseph, and consume it, and there be none to extinguish it:* this was said, because the Israelites never thought that they should be thus consumed by a sudden burning. *The fire* then *shall devour the house of Joseph, and there will be none to quench it.*

In the verse before, I omitted one thing, to which I shall now advert. The Prophet said, that *Bethel* would *be for a trouble,* or be nothing. Bethel, we know, is called in another place Bethaven, the house of iniquity; and Aven means in Hebrew sometimes iniquity, sometimes grief or trouble, sometimes labour or difficulty, and sometimes nothing. It is not to be taken for iniquity in this place; this is certain: but Amos, on the contrary, speaks of punishment, which awaited that place, since it was abominable in the sight of God. As then he had said of Gilgal, that it would be rolled; so now he says of Bethel, that it would be for a trouble or grief, or be nothing. Either senses would be appropriate;—that Bethel, from which the Israelites hoped for a remedy to all their evils, would be to them a trouble, that is, the cause of their ruin, or that it would be nothing; as though he had said, that their hopes would be fallacious and empty in expecting any relief from Bethel. It afterwards follows—

7. Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth.	7. Qui convertunt in absynthium judicium, et justitiam in terra dimittunt.

Here the Prophet, after having inveighed against superstitions, comes to the second table of the law. The Prophets are sometimes wont to shake off self-complacencies from

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hypocrites, when they spread before God their external veils, by saying that all their ceremonies are useless, except accompanied with integrity of heart: but in this place the Prophet expressly condemns in the Israelites two things; that is, that they had corrupted the true worship of God, departed from the doctrine of the law, and polluted themselves with ungodly superstitions; and he also reprehends them for their wicked and dishonest conduct towards men,—for their disregard of what was right and equitable,—for plunder, cruelty, and fraud. This second subject the Prophet handles, when he says, that they *converted judgment into wormwood, and allowed righteousness to fall on the ground.* But the rest I must defer till to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou seest us to be so entangled, not only by depraved lusts, but also by the allurements of Satan, and by our own ignorance and blindness,—O grant, that being roused by thy word we may at the same time learn to open our eyes to thy wholesome warnings by which thou callest us to thyself: and since we cannot do this without thy Spirit being our guide and leader, grant that he may enlighten our eyes, to the end that, being truly and from the heart turned to thee, we may know that thou art propitious and ready to hear all who unfeignedly seek thee, and that, being reconciled to thee in Christ, we may also know that thou art to us a propitious Father, and that thou wilt bestow on us all kinds of blessings, until thou at length gatherest us to thy celestial kingdom, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Fifty-eighth.

Ye who convert judgment into wormwood, and leave righteousness on the ground. We stated yesterday why the Prophet added this sentence: he wished in every way to prove the Israelites guilty. Having inveighed against their superstitions, he now adds, that they acted also falsely and iniquitously towards men. And he attacks the chiefs who ruled the people, not because they were alone culpable, but because

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they drew with them the whole community. We know that diseases descend from the head to the whole body: and this is the reason why the Prophet directs his address especially to the rulers. He says that they *turned judgment to wormwood.* This similitude often occurs. Nothing, we know, is sweeter than justice, when every one gains his own right; for this serves much to preserve peace. Hence nothing can be more gratifying to us, than when uprightness and equity prevail. This is the reason why the Prophet calls that iniquitous state of things bitterness, when no regard is had for justice and rectitude. He says also that *righteousness was cast down on the ground,* or thrown to the ground. Now the judges ought to have defended what was right among the people: for this, we know, is the duty enjoined them: and the Prophet now lays this to their charge —that they left justice on the ground—that they suffered it to lie prostrate. We now perceive the Prophet's design. It follows—

8. *Seek him* that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: the Lord *is* his name.

8. Qui facit Pleiades et Orionem, qui convertit in lucem matutinam tenebras, et diem in noctem obtenebrescere facit: qui vocat aquas maris et effundit super superficiem terræ: Jehova nomen ejus.

Some interpreters connect this verse with the former, and think that what the Prophet had said before is here explained; but they are greatly mistaken, and misrepresent the meaning of the Prophet. We have indeed said, that the Prophet shows in that verse that the Israelites were not only perfidious and covenant-breakers with regard to God, having fallen away from his pure worship, but that they also acted iniquitously and dishonestly towards men: but these interpreters think that God is, by a metaphor, called righteousness, and that religion is called judgment. This is in no way the mind of the Prophet; nay, it is, as I have already said, wholly different.

What, then, does the Prophet mean? I take this verse by itself; but yet we must see why the Prophet proclaims to us, in such sublime terms, the power of God. We know how heedlessly hypocrites trifle with God, as though they had

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to do with a child: for they imagine a god according to their own fancy; yea, they transform him whenever they please, and think him to be delighted with frivolous trifles. Hence it is, that the way of pacifying God is with them so easy. When in various ways they provoke God's wrath, there is in readiness some little expiation, and they think that it is a satisfaction to God. As then hypocrites imagine that God is similar to a dead idol, this is the reason why the Prophet, in order to banish these delusions, shows that the nature of God is far different. "What sort of being," he says, "do you think God to be? for ye bring your worthless and frivolous expiations as though God would be satisfied with these trifles, as though he were a child or some silly woman: but God is He *who makes the Pleiades and Orion, who turns darkness into morning, who changes day into night, who pours forth on the earth the waters of the sea.*[1] Go to now, and set forth your play-things, as though access to God were open to you, when ye labour to pacify him with your trifles." We now perceive the Prophet's object: we see how this verse ought to be taken separately, and yet to be connected with the main discourse of the Prophet; for after having inveighed against the gross vices of the people, seeing he had to contend with the headstrong, yea, with the mockers of God, he grows angry and sharply exclaims, "What do ye think or feign God to be?" Then the Prophet sets forth the character of God as being far different from what hypocrites imagine him to be in their own fancies. "What are your notions of him?" he says. "You indeed make God to be like a child; but he made the Pleiades and Orion."

[1] The verse, as evidently understood by Calvin, is to be thus rendered:—

"He who made the Pleiades and Orion,
Who turns darkness to morning,
And darkens the day to night,
Who calls the waters of the sea,
And pours them on the face of the earth,—
Jehova is his name."

This is the rendering of the Septuagint. It is not consonant with the character of Hebrew to borrow a word, as it is done in our version, from a preceding verse. *Newcome* has prefixed the words, "That have forsaken;" on what authority it does not appear. The obvious construction of the passage is given above.—*Ed.*

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Some translate כימה, *kime*, Arcturus. There is no need of labouring much about such names; for the Jews, ignorant of the liberal sciences, cannot at this day certainly determine what stars are meant; and they show also their complete ignorance as to herbs. They are indeed bold enough; they define what every word means; but yet they betray, as I have said, their own want of knowledge. And our Prophet was a shepherd, and had never learnt astronomy in his youth nor in his manhood. He therefore speaks of the stars according to the common notions of his age: but he, no doubt, selected two stars of an opposite influence. The *Pleiades* (which are also called the seven stars) are, we know, mild; for when they rise, they moderate the rigour of the cold, and also bring with them the vernal rain. But *Orion* is a fiercer star, and ever excites grievous and turbulent commotions both at its rising and setting.[1] This being the case, the Prophet names here those stars most commonly known. He

[1] Commentators are not agreed as to the meaning of the words rendered here, Pleiades and Orion, כימה and כסיל. Thev are found only in two other places, Job ix. 9, and xxxviii. 31; and in the first of these in conjunction with עש, in our version, Arcturus, and also in the second with מזרות, *Mazzaroth*. Most think that all these were names given by the Hebrews to certain stars or constellations. It is evident, that with the exception of the last, Mazzaroth, the words, Pleiades, &c., are names borrowed from the Greek poets, and first introduced by the translators of the Septuagint: but they observe no consistency; for in Job ix. 9, they render כימה, Αρκτουρος, and in Job xxxviii. 31, πλειας; and in Amos the sentence is paraphrased and the word is left out. Again, כסיל is rendered ἑσπερος, the evening star, in Job ix. 9, and Ωρίωνος in chap. xxxviii. 31; while עש is translated ἑσπερις, and in chap. ix. 9, πλειας. This confusion proves that the translators exercised no discrimination. The Vulgate exhibits a similar inconsistency.

Parkhurst's view is the most satisfactory, and corresponds with the terms used in connection with the words in Job xxxviii. 31, and with the context here. *The genial heat*, according to him, is כימה, and *the cold* is כסיל. The passage in Job is, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, (כימה,) or loose the bands of Orion? (כסיל;)" which may be thus rendered, "Canst thou bind up (or restrain) the delightful influences (מעדנות, the delights, the pleasures, the delicacies) of the genial heat, (כימה,) or open the contractions of the cold? (כסיל.)" In the present passage what things God is continually doing are referred to, and not his past works, which would be the case were the constellations intended. Then the first line would run thus:—

He who makes the genial heat and the cold.

Thus the whole passage would agree well together, as relating the various acts of God as the supreme agent in the material world. *Ed.*

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says, "Since the Lord changes the seasons, so that the mildness of the spring follows the rigour of winter, and since days succeed nights, and darkness comes after the light, and since it is God who renders a serene heaven suddenly cloudy by raising vapours from the veins of the earth, or from the sea, —since all these changes manifest to us the wonderful power of God, how is it that men so presumptuously trifle with him? Whence is this so great a stupidity, unless they wholly overlook the works of God, and leave him a name only, and see not what is before their eyes?" We hence see how beautifully and how strikingly the Prophet does here set forth the power of God, and how opportunely he speaks of it. He then *maketh the Pleiades and Orion.*

And he adds, *He changeth darkness into the morning, he maketh the day to grow dark into night.* Here he brings before us the various changes of times. The night turns not into day by chance, nor does darkness come over the earth by chance when the sun hath ceased to shine. Since then this variety ought to awaken even the unwilling, and to constrain them to adore God, how is it that his majesty is treated by men with such mockery, that they bring their frivolous expiations, and think him to be no more angry with them when they present to him what is worthless and childish, as when a nurse by a pleasing sound soothes an infant? I say again, whence is this so great a stupor, except that men wilfully close their eyes to so bright a display, by which God shows himself to us, that he might constrain us all to adore his name? We now see why the Prophet describes the various changes which daily take place.

He speaks also of the waters of the sea, *Who calleth*, he says, *the waters of the sea, and poureth them on the surface of the earth.* Some explain this of fountains; for they think that all waters proceed from the sea, and that fountains are nothing else but as it were the eyes of the sea: but this passage ought rather to be viewed as referring to rains; for the power of God is not so conspicuous in the waters which come from the earth, as when he suddenly darkens the heavens with vapours. For whence is it, that the heavens, a while ago clear, is now cloudy? We see clouds rising,—but at whose

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command? Philosophers indeed assign some natural causes; they say that vapours are drawn up both from the earth and the sea by the heat of the sun: but why is this done to-day rather than yesterday? Whence is this diversity, except that God shows that the element of water is under his control, and also the air itself, as well as the vapours, which are formed as it were out of nothing? For what is vapour but gross air, or air condensed? and yet vapours arise from the hollow places of the earth as well as from the sea. Certainly the water could not of itself produce a new element: it is ponderous, and vapours rise up on high: how is it that water thus loses its own nature? But vapours are in a middle state between air and water, and yet they ascend above the air, and arise from the earth to the heavens. The Prophet therefore does not without reason say, that waters are called, that is, that these vapours are called, from the sea, and are afterwards poured on the surface of the earth. This may be understood of the clouds as well as of rain; for clouds extend over the earth and surround us; and rain is poured on the earth. This is doubtless the wonderful work of God.

Hence the Prophet concludes, *Jehovah is his name.* "It is not the idol which you have devised for yourselves; for your expiations might indeed draw a smile from a child, but they cannot satisfy the judgment of God. Then think that you have to do with God himself, and let these fallacious delusions deceive you no longer." It follows—

9. That strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong, so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress.	9. Qui fortificat vastatorem super robustum, et vastator super munitiones ascendet.[1]

The Prophet speaks not now of the ordinary works of God, in which his majesty, inspiring the highest reverence, as well

[1] This version differs widely from ours, but is no doubt nearer the meaning of the original. *Newcome's* translation is as follows—

Who scattereth desolation over the strong,
And bringeth desolation over the fortress.

What comes nearest the original is the rendering proposed by Parkhurst, and is striking and poetical: the first line is this—

Who causeth the waster to laugh at strength.

The verb here used means primarily to laugh or to smile, and in a

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as his dread power, shines forth; but he more closely urges the Israelites, who had become so hardened in their vices, that they were wholly inflexible. Here then the Prophet charges them with contumacy, and says, "What, think you, will take place? Ye are strong; but God will stir up robbers against you, who will prevail, and beat down and shatter in pieces that obduracy, through which you now resist God." Thus after having filled them with dread by setting before them the course of nature, he now holds forth this threat—that they would themselves have to feel the power of God: for however callous they were, and though in their ferocity they dared to rise up against God, he declares that it would avail them nothing; inasmuch as there was in God's hand a waster, who would prevail against their obduracy.

And a waster, he says, *shall ascend on the very fortresses*, or shall enter the fortresses. The Prophet here, in an indirect way, laughs to scorn the vain confidence which filled the Israelites, on observing that they were inclosed in fortified cities, and had defences and a powerful army. All this, he says, will be wholly useless to them when God will raise up strong depredators, who will penetrate through well fortified gates, and leap over walls, and enter strongly defended cities. We now apprehend what the Prophet had in view in these words.

It will now be easy to apply this doctrine to our own instruction: Whenever we are not suitably moved, either by the truth, or by warnings, or by threatenings, let this come to our minds which the Prophet teaches here, namely, that God cannot be mocked, and that hypocrites gain nothing by their delusive ceremonies, when they sacrifice and present their expiations, which by no means please God,—how so? We may indeed easily learn the reason from the nature of God himself. Hence, that we may not transform God, let us

secondary sense, to be refreshed or made cheerful, or to be comforted. It is here in Hiphil, the causative mood. The whole verse may be thus rendered:—

> Who causeth the waster to laugh at strength;
> And a waster on the fortress he will bring.—*Ed.*

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learn to raise up our eyes to behold him, and also to look on all things around us; and this will constrain us to adore and fear his great power. It follows—

10. They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.

10. Oderunt (odio habent) in porta corripientem, et loquentem rectum abominantur.

It is probable that in this verse also, the judges are reproved by the Prophet, though what is here said may be extended to the whole people: but as nearly the whole discourse is levelled against the judges, I readily subscribe to the opinion, that the Prophet now accuses the judges on this account,—because they could not bear to be reproved for the great license they allowed themselves, but, on the contrary, abhorred all those who reproved them. What then he says as to the reprover being hated in the gate, is to be thus explained: When judges sat in the gate and perverted justice and right, and when any one reminded them of their duty, they haughtily rejected all admonitions, and even hated them. *In the gate* then, that is, They who ought to rule others, and to correct whatever vice there may be among the people, cannot themselves bear any reprover, when their own vices require strong remedies.

And well would it be, if this disease were healed at this day. We indeed see that kings, and those in authority, wish to be deemed sacred, and they will allow no reproof. Instantly the majesty of God is violated in their person; for they complain and cry out, whenever teachers and God's servants dare to denude their wicked conduct. This vice then, which the Prophet condemns, is not the vice of one time; for, even in the present day, those who occupy the seats of judgment wish to be exempt from all reproofs, and would claim for themselves a free liberty in sinning, inasmuch as they think not that they belong to the common class of men, and imagine themselves exempt from all reprehension; in short, they wish to rule without any equity, for power with them is nothing but unbridled licentiousness. We now understand the Prophet's meaning. It now follows—

11. Forasmuch therefore as your treading *is* upon the poor, and ye

11. Quia calcastis pauperem (*vel*, onus imposuistis,) et onus frumenti

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take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them.

abstulistis ab eo, domos excisionis (*hoc est*, ex lapide quadrato) ædificabitis, et non habitabitis in illis; vineas desiderabiles plantabitis, et non bibetis vinum earum.

The Prophet here declares, that though the judges enriched themselves by plunder, yet God would not allow them to enjoy their booty, but that he would deprive them of the great wealth they had accumulated. This is the import of the whole. We hence see that the Prophet contends not here with the common people, but professedly attacks the chief men, inasmuch as from them did proceed all the prevailing evil.

The first thing is, they *imposed burdens on the poor*, and then, they *took away corn from them*. He says first, "A burden have you laid," or, "ye have *trodden* on the poor;" for the verb may be taken in either sense, and it matters not which as to the import of the passage. It is not indeed often that we meet with a verb of four letters:[1] but interpreters explain this as meaning to tread under foot or to lay a burden. The Prophet, I doubt not, accuses here the judges of not sparing miserable men, but of burdening them with tributes and exactions; for this is to burden the poor. Then he adds, *Ye have taken a load of corn*. The Prophet had doubtless fixed here on a species of cruelty in robbing others, the most detestable. When judges take money, or any other gift, it is less odious than when the poor are compelled to

[1] The verb is בושסכם, from בוש, but in ten MSS. of Kennicott, and in five of D'Rossi, the ו is left out: and then ש is supposed to be put for ס, as Amos in another place, ch. vii. 14, puts ס for ש. The verb בס, and in its reduplicate form בסס, occurs in other places, and means, to tread or trample under foot. The expression here literally is, "your trampling;" but such a form may often be expressed in our language, "ye trample." The connection of the whole verse will be better seen by the following version:—

Therefore, as ye trample on the poor,
And tribute of corn extort from him,—
Houses of hewn stone you may build,
But ye shall not dwell in them;
Vineyards of delight ye may plant,
But ye shall not drink their wine.—*Ed.*

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carry corn to them on their shoulders. It was the same as though they surrendered their very life to their plunderers; for when judges constrained loads of corn to be brought to them, it was as though they strangled the poor, or drew blood from their veins, inasmuch as they robbed them of their food and support. We now perceive what the Prophet meant: You have, he says, oppressed the poor, and *taken* from them *a load of corn.* Some render בר, *ber*, chosen, but improperly.

Ye shall therefore build, &c. He declares here that they would not realize their hope, though they plundered on all sides to build palaces, and though they got great possessions to enrich themselves and their heirs: "This self-love," he says, "will deceive you; defraud, rob, plunder; but the Lord will at length strip you of all your robberies: for after having been venal, and prostituted not only your souls but your shame for gain, and after having spent much labour and expense in building, ye *shall not dwell in your palaces;* and when ye shall have planted vineyards with great expense and care, *ye shall not drink their wine.*" Isaiah also speaks in the same strain, 'O plunderer, thou shalt be exposed to plunder,' (Isa. xxxiii. 1.) Experience also teaches the same thing; for we see how the Lord transfers from one to another the possessions of this world: he who seems to provide riches after his death for his heirs for ever, passes his whole life, as we see, without enjoying his own property; for he is hungry in the midst of the greatest abundance, and even famishes himself. This is very frequently the case. And then when his abundance comes to his heirs, it falls into the hands of prodigals, who soon dissipate the whole. And sometimes the Lord allows not that such vast wealth should have heirs, and it is scattered here and there, and the very name is extinguished, though the name to such haughty and wealthy men is a great object, as they commonly wish it to be eminent in the world for some hundred ages after their death.

This passage of the Prophet ought therefore to be especially noticed. He tells us that unjust gains were laid up by these robbers and wicked plunderers, in order to amass great riches; but he adds, "The Lord will spoil them, and will not

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suffer them to enjoy their abundance, however anxiously they had collected it from all quarters." Let us now proceed—

12. For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate *from their right.*

12. Quia cognosco magnas iniquitates vestras (*vel*, multas, רבים) et robusta scelera vestra; afflictores justi, sublatores redemptionis, et pauperes in porta declinare faciunt (*hoc est*, causa cadere faciunt.)

The Prophet introduces God here as the speaker, that the threatening might be more authoritative: for we know, as it has been before stated, that the Prophets were despised by haughty men; but when God himself appeared as it were before them, it was strange if no fear laid hold on them; they had at least no excuse for their presumption, if God's name did not touch their hearts and humble them.

I know, he says, *your iniquities;* as though he said, "Ye do not think yourselves bound to render an account to men, as probably no such account will be rendered by you; but how will you be able, think you, to escape my tribunal? for I am your judge, and mine is the government: however ferociously ye now tread on the poor, and evasively contend with me, your crimes must necessarily be judged by me; *I know your crimes.*" And as the rich by their splendour covered every wickedness, particularly the magistrates, who were adorned with a public character, God says that their turpitude was fully known to him: as though he said, "Contend as much as you please, still your iniquities are sufficiently apparent to me; ye will gain nothing by your subtle evasions." Moreover, he reprehends them not merely for slight offences, but says that they were wholly past being borne with. When something is done amiss by the highest power, indulgence is commonly granted; for nothing is more difficult than for one who sustains so great and heavy a burden, to retain so much integrity as to be free from every blame: but the Lord shows here that they were not lightly culpable, but that their crimes were so grievous and flagrant that they could not be endured. We now then understand what was the object of the Prophet.

When therefore their own greatness dazzles the eyes of proud men, let us know that they cannot deprive God of his

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right; for though he may not judge them to-day, he will yet shortly ascend his tribunal: and he reminds them, that those pompous displays by which they cover their many crimes, are only shadows which will vanish. This is what the Prophet means.

Then he calls them, *The oppressors of the just.* He enumerates here some particulars, with regard to which, the iniquity of the judges whom he now addresses might be, as it were, felt to be gross and abominable. *Ye oppress*, he says, *the just;* this was one thing: then follows another, *They take* כֹּפֶר, *capher, expiation*, or, the price of redemption. The Prophet, I have no doubt, meant to point out here something different from the former crime. Though interpreters blend these two things, I yet think them to be wholly different; for these mercenary judges made an agreement with the wicked, whenever any homicide or other violence was perpetrated; in short, whenever any one implicated himself in any grievous sin, they saw that there was a prey taken, and anxiously gaped for it: they wished murders to be committed daily, that they might acquire gain. Since, then, these judges were thus intent on bribery, the Prophet accuses them as being *takers of ransom.* They ought to have punished crimes; this they did not; but they let go the wicked unpunished; they spared murderers, and adulterers, and robbers, and sorcerers, not indeed without rewards, for they brought the price of redemption, and departed as if they were innocent.

We now perceive what the Prophet means here; and well would it be were this crime not so common: but at this day, the cruelty of many judges appears especially in this—that they hunt for crimes for the sake of gain, which seems to be as it were a ransom; for this is the proper meaning of the word כֹּפֶר, c*apher.* As then this evil commonly prevails, it is no wonder that the Prophet, while reprehending the corruptions of his time, says, that judges took a ransom.

Then he adds, *The poor they turn aside* from judgment *in the gate.* This is the third crime: the Prophet complains, that they deprived miserable men of their right, because they could not bring so large a bribe as the rich; though relying on the goodness of their cause, they thought themselves sure

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of victory. The Prophet complains, that they were disappointed of their hope, and their right was denied them *in the gate*, that is, in the court of justice; for we know that it was an ancient custom for judges to sit in the gates, and there to administer justice; and hence Amos mentions here gate twice: and what he complains of was the more disgraceful, inasmuch as the judicial court was, as it were, a sacred asylum, to which injured men resorted, that they might have their wrongs redressed. When this became the den of robbers, what any more remained for them? We now then see that the Prophet speaks not here of the common people, but that he mainly levels his reproofs against the rulers. Let us go on—

13. Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it *is* an evil time.

13. Propterea prudens in tempore hoc silebit, quia tempus hoc malum est.[1]

Some interpreters think that a punishment is here denounced on the people of Israel, and that is, that the Lord would deprive them of Prophets and teachers. We indeed know that nothing is more to be dreaded, than that the Lord should extinguish the light of sound doctrine, and suffer us to go astray in darkness, yea, to stumble, and to rush headlong to ruin, as they do who are destitute of wholesome counsels. But I think that the meaning is quite different. Another exposition may be deemed probable, which is this, —that the prudent dared not to speak on account of the prevailing tyranny; for Amos had said before that the judges,

[1] This verse literally rendered from the Hebrew is as follows:—

> Therefore, the prudent at that time will be silent;
> For a time of evil *will* that *be*.

It is a rule, which may be viewed as nearly, if not wholly, universal, that the substantive verb, *to be*, whenever understood and not expressed in the original, is to be rendered in the same tense with the other verbs in the sentence. So here, "A time of evil *will* that *be*," and not, "*is*;" for the previous verb is in the future tense.

There are many instances of the neglect of this rule in our version, as in Psal. xxiii. 4, "I will fear no evil; for thou *art* with me;" it ought to be, "for thou *wilt be* with me." And then the line which follows ought to be rendered in the same way, for the verb is in the future tense, —"Thy rod and thy staff, they will comfort me."—*Ed.*

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who then ruled, would not bear reproof. Hence, *the prudent* were forced *to be silent at that time, for that time was evil;* and every liberty of teaching was taken away. And this meaning opens still wider; for the silent would have to bear the wrongs done to them, and to devour inwardly their own groans, for they dared not to complain; nay, the very teachers did not oppose the torrent, for they saw that it was not the time to resist haughty and violent men. But this view may be also fitly applied to God's judgment, that the *prudent* would be *silent*, being put in fear: for silence is often connected with fear: and it is a dreadful judgment of God, when the prudent closes his mouth, or puts his hand, as it is said elsewhere, on his mouth.

As to the first exposition, I have already rejected it, and it has certainly nothing in its favour: but the second may be accommodated to the general meaning of the Prophet, that is, *the prudent shall be silent at that time*, because all liberty shall be taken away. I am, at the same time, unwilling thus to restrict it, as they do; for it became not a wise man to pass by in silence sins so grievous: though tyrants threatened hundred deaths, yet those on whom was laid the necessity of teaching ought not to have been silent. But the Prophet here speaks not of what the prudent would do or omit to do; on the contrary, he intimates, that whenever they began to speak, the arrogance of the judges would be so great as to repel all reproofs. *The prudent* then *shall be silent*, not willingly; for that, as I have said, would have been unworthy of wise men. And the Prophet here, by way of honour, calls those *prudent* who rightly discern things, who are not led away by corruptions, but remain upright; who, though they see the whole order of things collapsing, and though they see heaven and earth, as it were, mingled together, yet retain a sound judgment. Since the Prophet speaks of such men, he certainly does not mean that they would be willingly silent; for it would have been a base indolence in them thus to betray the truth and a good cause. What then does he mean? Even this—that the wickedness of tyrants would be so great, as not to allow one word to be declared by the prudent; when any one came forth to reprove their vices, he was not suffered.

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When therefore he says, that *the time* would *be evil,* he means, that such audacity would prevail, that all liberty would be denied to wise men. They would then be forced to be silent, for they could effect nothing by speaking, nay, they would have no freedom of speech allowed them: and though they attempted to discharge their office, yet tyrannical violence would instantly impose silence on them. Similar was the case with Lot, of whom it is said, that he groaned and vexed his own heart, (Gen. xvi.) He was constrained, I have no doubt, to be silent, after having often used free reproofs; nay, he doubtless exposed himself to many dangers by his attempts to reprove the Sodomites. Such seems to me to be the meaning of the Prophet, when he says, that the prudent would be silent, because these tyrants would impose silence on all teachers,—now throwing them into prisons, then banishing them,—now denouncing death on them, then visiting them with some punishment, or loading them with reproaches, or treating them with ridicule as persons worthy of contempt. We now understand the Prophet's design. We may further observe, that men have then advanced to the extremity of evil, when reception is no more given to sound doctrine and salutary counsels, and when all liberty is sternly suppressed, so that prudent men dare not to reprove vices, however rampant they may be, which even children observe, and the blind feel. When licentiousness has arrived to this pitch, it is certain that the state of things is past recovery, and that there is no hope of repentance or of a better condition: and this was the meaning of the Prophet.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we cannot see with our eyes thy infinite and incomprehensible glory, which is hid from us, we may learn at least by thy works what thy great power is, so as to be humbled under thy mighty hand, and never trifle with thee as hypocrites are wont to do; but to bring a heart really sincere, and also pure hands, that our whole life may testify that a true fear of thy name prevails in our hearts: and grant, that whilst we devote ourselves wholly to thy service, we may courageously and with invincible hearts fight against

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all these corruptions, by which we are on every side beset, until having finished our warfare, we attain to that celestial rest, which has been prepared for us by Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Fifty-ninth.

14. Seek good and not evil, that ye may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken.

14. Quærite bonum et non malum, ut vivatis; et erit hoc modo Jehova, Deus exercituum, vobiscum, quemadmodum dixistis.

The Prophet again repeats, that it was only owing to the Israelites themselves that it was not well with them; for God was ready to grant them his blessing; but they designedly sought a curse for themselves. Inasmuch, then, as hypocrites are wont to put away from themselves the blame of every evil, and to complain of their miseries, as though the Lord afflicted them unjustly, the Prophet here shows, that no evil happened to the Israelites, but what they procured by their vices: and at the same time he exhorts them to repentance, and gives them the hope of pardon, provided they hardened not their hearts to the last. He therefore bids them to *seek good;* but by adding, *seek not evil,* his words are full of meaning, as though he had said, that they were so fixed in their own wickedness, that they could not be torn away from it. The import of the whole, then, is this—that the Israelites could not complain of being too severely treated by God, because they suffered not themselves to be kindly dealt with. And the Prophet assigns this as the reason—that they were not only alienated from what was good, but that they also with avidity and eager desire followed what was evil: in the meantime he exhorts them to repentance, and adds a promise the more to encourage them.

Seek then *good,* he says, *that ye may live;* and then he adds, *And thus* God *will be with you, as ye have said.* Here the wickedness of the people is reproved, who sought to bind God to themselves; for hypocrites are wont to misapply the promises: when they presumptuously reject God himself,

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they still wish him to be under an obligation to them. Thus they gloried that they were the children of Abraham, an elect people; circumcision was to them like a royal diadem; they sought to be superior to all other nations: and thus they abused the name of God, and at the same time they petulantly scorned both the word of God and his Prophets. As, then, they ever boasted that God was dwelling in the midst of them, the Prophet says, "Then and *thus will God be with you*, if ye seek what is good or the doing of good;" for to seek good is nothing else than to endeavour to do good; as though he said, "Change your nature and your manners; for hitherto iniquity has prevailed among you; you have been violent, and rapacious, and fraudulent: begin now to do good, then God will be with you."

There is therefore a great emphasis to be laid on the particle כֵּן, *can, thus* will God be with you: for the Prophet reminds them of what so often occurs in the law, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," who dwell in the midst of you, (Lev. xi. 44.) God shows, in these words, that it could not be that he would dwell with the Israelites, except they sanctified themselves, that there might be a mutual agreement. But they had no regard for holiness, and yet wished God to be bound to them. This false confidence the Prophet derides, and says, that a certain condition is fixed in the law, according to which God would dwell in the midst of them. *Thus* then *will* God *be in the midst of you;* that is, when he sees that you strive after uprightness and the doing of good.

I have already explained what this means, *as ye have said;* for he proves that foolish vaunting to be false which was heard among the Israelites: "Has not the Lord chosen and adopted us as his people? Is not the ark of the covenant a sure pledge of his presence? How then could he depart from us? God would deny himself, were he not to keep his pledged faith; for he covenanted with our fathers, that we should be his flock even to the end of the world." Since, then, they thus foolishly boasted, and were, at the same time, covenant-breakers, the Prophet says, "Ye boast, indeed, by your mouth that God is in the midst of you, but see what he in his turn stipulates and requires from you. If, then, ye

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respond to his call, he will not surely be wanting to his pledged faith; but as ye wilfully depart from him, he must necessarily become alienated from you." We now then perceive the meaning of the Prophet in these words. It follows—

15. Hate the evil and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate; it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

15. Odio habete malum et diligite bonum; et statuite in porta judicium, si fortè misereatur Jehova Deus exercituum reliquiarum Joseph.

The Prophet inculcates the same truth; and he did this designedly; for he saw that nothing was more difficult than to bring this people to repentance, who, in the first place, were by nature refractory; and, in the second place, were hardened by long habit in their vices. For Satan gains dominion by degrees in the hearts of men, until he renders them wholly stupid, so that they discern not between right and wrong. Such, then, was the blindness which prevailed among the people of Israel: it was therefore necessary often to goad them as Amos does here.

Hence he bids them to *hate evil and to love good.* And this order ought to be preserved, when we desire really to turn to God and to repent. Amos here addresses perverse men, who were so immersed in their own wickedness, that they distinguished no longer between light and darkness: it was therefore not without reason that he begins with this sentence, that they should *hate evil;* as though he had said, that there had been hitherto a hostile disagreement between them and God, and that therefore a change was necessary, in order that they might return to him. For when any one has already wished to devote himself to God's service, this exhortation to hate evil is superfluous: but when one is sunk still in his own vices, he has need of such a stimulant. The Prophet therefore does here reprove them; and though they flattered themselves, he yet shows that they were greatly addicted to their vices.

He afterwards adds, *Love good.* He intimates, that it would be a new thing for them to cultivate benevolence, and

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to apply themselves to what was right. The import of the whole is this,—that the Israelites would have no peace with God, until they were wholly changed and became new men; for they were now strangers to goodness, and given to wickedness and depravity. But Amos mentions here only a part of repentance: for טוב, *thub*, no doubt means the doing of good, as iniquity is properly called רע, *ro*, [the doing of evil.] He speaks not here of faith, or of prayer to God, but describes repentance by its fruits; for our faith, as it has been stated in other places, is proved in this way; it manifests itself, when sincerity and uprightness towards one another flourish in us, when we spontaneously love one another and perform the duties of love. Thus then by stating a part for the whole, is repentance here described; that is, the whole, as they commonly say, is shown by a part.

But now the Prophet adds, *And set up judgment in the gate.* He here glances at the public state of things, of which we have largely spoken in our yesterday's lecture. A deluge of iniquity had so inundated the land, that in the very courts of justice, and in the passing of judgments, there was no longer any equity, any justice. Since then corruption had taken possession of the very gates, the Prophet exhorts them to *set up judgment in the gate; it may be,* he says, *that God will show mercy to the remnants of Joseph.* The Prophet shows here that it was hardly possible that the people should continue safe; nay, that this was altogether hopeless. But as the common degeneracy, like a violent tempest, carried away the good along with it, the Prophet here admonishes the faithful not to despond, though they were few in number, but to betake themselves to God, to suffer others to fall away and to run headlong to ruin, and at the same time to provide for their own safety, as those who flee away from the burning.

We now then understand the object of the Prophet: for when the whole multitude, given up to destruction, had laid aside every care for their safety, a few remained, who yet suffered themselves to be borne along, as though a tempest, as it has been said, had carried them away. The Prophet

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then does here give comfort to such good men as were still alive, and shows that though the people were sinking, there was no reason for them to despair, for the Lord still promised to be propitious to them. What this doctrine teaches is this, —that ten ought not to regard what a thousand may do; but they ought to hear God speaking, rather than to abandon themselves with the multitude; when they see men blindly and impetuously running headlong to their own ruin, they should not follow them, but rather listen to God, and not reject his offered salvation. However much then their small number may dishearten them, they ought not yet to suffer God's promises to be forced or snatched away from them, but fully to embrace them.

The expression, *it may be*, is not one of doubt, as it has been stated in another place, (Joel ii.,) but the Prophet, on the contrary, intended sharply to stimulate the faithful, that he might, as it was needful, increase their alacrity. Whenever then פֶּן, *pen*, lest perhaps, or אוּלַי, *auli*, it may be, is set down, let us know, that they are not intended to leave men's minds in suspense or perplexity, that they may despond or come to God in doubt; but that a difficulty is thereby implied, in order to stir them up and to increase the ardour of their desire: and this is necessary in a mixed state of things, for we see how great is the indolence of our flesh. Even they who desire to return to God, do not hasten with that ardour which becomes them, but creep slowly, and hardly draw themselves along; and then when many obstacles meet them, they who would have been otherwise full of courage, almost despair at every step. It is therefore necessary to apply such goadings as these, "Take heed; for when any one is beset on every side by fire, he will not long delay, nor think with himself how he may escape without any hurt and without any inconvenience; but he will risk danger rather than that he should by delay or tardiness deprive himself of a way of escape. So also ye see, that iniquity surrounds you on every side; what then is to be done, except that each of you must quickly flee away?"

We now then perceive the design of the Prophet in saying, *It may be that he will show mercy*. The sum of the whole

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is this,—That there was need of a great change, that they might become altogether new men, who had hitherto devoted themselves to wickedness,—and then, that the few should not wait until the whole multitude joined them; for though the people resolved to go astray, yet God ought to have been attended to, when recalling the few to himself and bidding them to escape, as it were, from the burning,—and, thirdly, that there is stated here a difficulty, that those still healable might not come tardily to God, but that they might strive against impediments and quickly run to him, seeing that they could not without great effort extricate themselves; they were therefore to come to God, not slowly; but having overcome all difficulties, they were, on the contrary, to flee to him. It now follows—

16. Therefore the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord, saith thus, Wailing *shall be* in all streets; and they shall say in all the highways, Alas! alas! and they shall call the husbandmen to mourning, and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing.

16. Quapropter dicit Jehova Deus exercituum, Dominus, In omnibus compitis lamentum, et in omnibus viis dicent, Væ, væ; et vocabunt agricolam ad luctum, et lamentum erit super omnes peritos luctus.

The particle of inference, set down here, confirms what has been already said,—that the Israelites vainly flattered themselves, though they were in the worst condition. And as the Prophet knew that there would be no end to their evasions, being, as they were, perverse hypocrites, he cuts off all their subterfuges by saying, that God had now announced his purpose concerning them, and that however they might object this or that, God's judgment could no longer be deferred by delay, for their iniquity was more than sufficiently proved.

Therefore Jehovah, he says, *God of hosts, the Lord, saith.* He again repeats the attributes of God, in order to set forth his supreme power; as though he had said, that the Israelites gained nothing by acting the part of sophisters with God; for that he is the supreme judge, against whom there is no appeal, and whose sentence cannot be revoked. Hence we see that what is here checked is that waywardness which

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deceived the Israelites, while they continued to clamour against God. *Thus* then *saith Jehovah;* this was said, that they might understand that they were depraved in their disposition, corrupt in morals, wholly given to wickedness, and without a particle of goodness in them.

Thus then *saith God, In all the streets of concourse there shall be lamentation, and in all the highways they shall say, Woe! Woe!*[1] The Prophet disputes not here with them, nor denounces their vices, but speaks only of punishment; as though he had said, that the litigation was decided, that there was no need of an accuser; for nothing now remained but that God should execute his vengeance on them, inasmuch as he had already contended more than enough with them. And this mode of teaching frequently occurs in the Prophets; and it ought to be observed, that we may not think that we can gain anything by our evasions, when the Lord regards us as guilty. Let us then dread the punishment, which is prepared for all the intractable and the obstinate. They shall say, he says, in all the highways, Woe! Woe! They now prattle and think to prevail by their loquacity: when they murmur against God, they think that a delay is thus attained, that he dares not to inflict punishment; but God nevertheless proceeds with his judgment; they shall cry, Woe! Woe! there will be no time then for devising shifts, but they will be wholly taken up with wailing.

They shall call, he says, *the husbandman to mourning.* Some think אכר, *acar*, derived from נכר, *nucar*, which is to own, or, to make, one's self a stranger: and they are induced to regard it so only for this reason, because the Prophet immediately mentions those who were *skilful in mourning.* But, as all the Hebrews agree as to the meaning of this word, I

[1] *Henderson* gives a better rendering of these two lines,—

> In all the broad places *there shall be* wailing,
> And in all the streets, they shall say, Oh! Oh!

רחבות, from רחב, to be dilated, to be made broad or wide, mean broad places or broad streets: and חוצות, from חצה, to divide, signify the common streets, by which a town is divided. The exclamations, הו, הן, are rendered by Calvin, Væ! Væ! *Eheu*, in Latin, and *Woe*, in our language, come nearest in sound to the original.—*Ed.*

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am unwilling, without authority, to make any change: and it also harmonises well with what the Prophet says. At the same time, those Hebrew interpreters are wrong, who think that the order is inverted, as though it ought to have been thus, "The skilful in lamentation shall call husbandmen to mourning." But the Prophet, I doubt not, meant, that all were to be led together to mourning; for, though the manner was different, yet, in the first place, he appoints mourning to husbandmen, and then he shows that it would be common to all those who were wont to mourn.

Let us then consider what the Prophet says, *Lamentation to all the skilful in mourning.* Eastern nations, we know, exercised themselves in acting grief, and so they do at this day. We find, indeed, that they practised all manner of gesticulations: a greater moderation at least is seen among us, however heavy the grief may be. And this custom in former times came also into Europe; for we know that there were women hired to mourn at Rome; and we know that there were everywhere those who lamented. They therefore mourned for wages. This vicious custom the Prophet notices: but it is not discussed here whether this was done rightly or foolishly: for the Prophet here only refers to a common custom; 'There will be lamentation,' he says, 'to all the skilful in mourning;' that is, all who are wont to employ their labour in weeping will now be fully occupied. This is the first, though the last in order, at least it is the middle between two other clauses. Now, the two others follow, which are these, —that the very husbandmen would be led to mourning,—and then, that there would be lamentation in all the highways. But why does the Prophet say, that all the skilful in mourning were to be occupied in lamentation? Because the common calamity would thus constrain them. He further adds, that this grief would not be feigned; but that as destruction would prevail through the cities and fields, none would be exempt. However much the husbandmen were unaccustomed to such rites, they would yet wail and learn this new art, says the Prophet. We now then see what these words mean: but the next verse must be joined to them—

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17. And in all vineyards *shall be* wailing: for I will pass through thee, saith the Lord.

17. Et in omnibus vineis lamentum, quia transibo in medio tui, inquit Jehova.

A reason is now added, why the whole country would be taken up with lamentation and mourning; for the Lord would *pass* through the whole land. Surely nothing was more to be desired, than that God should visit his own land; but he here declares that he would pass through as an enemy. As then an enemy runs through a country and spreads devastation wherever he comes, such would be the passing through, which the Prophet now threatens. "God, then, of whom ye boast, as dwelling in the midst of you, will come forth, lay waste, and consume the whole land, as when an enemy spreads ruin far and wide."

But the Prophet seems to allude to the passing of God, described by Moses in Exod. xi. The Lord then passed through the middle of Egypt; that is, his wrath pervaded the whole land; no corner was safe or tranquil, for God's vengeance penetrated through every part of it. So also now the Prophet intimates, that the land of Israel would be like that of Egypt; for the Lord, who then testified his love towards the children of Abraham, would now, on the contrary, show himself an enemy to them, while passing through the midst of them. And the Prophet again indirectly ridicules the vain confidence by which the Israelites were blinded, while they used God's name as a pretext, as it will more clearly appear from what follows, for he says—

18. Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end *is* it for you? the day of the Lord *is* darkness and not light.

18. Væ desiderantibus diem Jehovæ! ad quid hoc vobis? Dies Jehovæ ipse tenebræ et non lux.

The Prophet expresses here more fully what he briefly and obscurely touched upon as to the passing of God through the land; for he shows that the Israelites acted strangely in setting up the name of God as their shield, as though they were under his protection, and in still entertaining a hope, though oppressed with many evils, because God had promised that they should be the objects of his care: he says that this was an extremely vain pretence. He yet more sharply reproves

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their presumption by saying, *Woe to those who desire the day of Jehovah!* This appears, even at the first view, to be very severe; but we need not wonder that the Prophet burns with so much indignation towards hypocrites, from whom that security, through which they became ferocious against God, could hardly be shaken off. And we see that the Holy Spirit treats hypocrites everywhere with much more severity than those who are openly impious and wicked: for the despisers of God, how stupid soever they may be, do not yet excuse their vices; but hypocrites seek ever to draw in God into the quarrel, and they have their veils to cover their turpitude: it was therefore necessary to treat them, as the Prophet does here, with sharpness and severity.

Woe, he says, *to those who desire the day of Jehovah!* Some expound this day of Jehovah of the day of death, and pervert the meaning of the Prophet; for they think that the Prophet speaks here of desperate men, who seek self-destruction, or lay violent hands on themselves. Woe, then, to those who desire the day of Jehovah, that is, who have recourse to hanging or to poison, as no other remedy appears to them. But the Prophet, as I have already reminded you, does here on the contrary rouse hypocrites. Others think that the contempt, which Amos has before noticed, is here reproved; and this in part is true; but they do not sufficiently follow up the Prophet's design; for they do not observe what is special in this place,—that hypocrites flattered themselves, falsely assuming this as a truth, that they were the people of God, and that God was bound to them. Though, then, the Israelites had been a hundred times perfidious, they yet continued arrogantly to boast of their circumcision; and then the law and the sacrifices, and all their ceremonies, were to them as banners,—"O! we are a holy nation, and God's heritage; we are the children of Abraham, and the redeemed of the Lord; we are a priestly kingdom." As then those things were ready in the mouth of all, the Prophet says, "Woe to those who desire the day of Jehovah!" And, indeed, when the Lord had begun to punish them for their sins, they still said, "The Lord, it may be, intends to try our constancy: but how can he destroy us? for he would then be false; his covenant cannot be made void: it is then certain that we

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shall be saved, and that he will be shortly reconciled to us." They did not indeed expect that God would be propitious to them; but as they were overwhelmed with many evils, they sought to allay their sorrows by such a drug.

When therefore the Prophet saw, that the Israelites so waywardly flattered themselves, and so foolishly and wickedly laid claim to the name of God, he says, *Woe to those who desire the day of Jehovah! What* will *this* be, he says, *to you? The day of Jehovah* will be *darkness and not light;* as though he said, "God is an enemy to you, and the nearer he comes to you, the more grievously you must be afflicted: he will bring nothing to you but devastation, for he will come armed to destroy you. There is therefore no reason for you to boast that you are a chosen people, that you are a priestly kingdom, for ye are fallen away from the favour of God; and this is to be imputed to your own misconduct. God then is armed for your destruction; and whenever he will appear, he will at the same time pursue you with cruelty and violence; and it will be for your destruction that God will come thus armed to you. Whenever then the Lord will come, your evils must necessarily be increased. The day then of Jehovah will be darkness and not light." He afterwards confirms this truth—

19. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.

20. *Shall* not the day of the Lord *be* darkness and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?

19. Quemadmodum si quis fugiat coram leone, et occurrat ei ursus; et veniat domum suam, et nitatur manu sua super parietem, et eum mordeat coluber.

20. Annon tenebræ dies Jehovæ et non lux? et caligo et non splendor ei?

Here is expressed more clearly what the Prophet had said before,—that hypocrites can have no hope, that the various changes, which may take place, will bring them any alleviation. Hypocrites, while straying in circuitous courses, do indeed promise better things to themselves, when the condition of the times is changed: and as Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, so hypocrites imitate the true servants of God. But it is a false imitation; for these are only fading flowers, no fruit follows; and besides, they proceed not from

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a living root. When the children of God are at any time pressed down by adverse events, they sustain and patiently nourish their faith with this consolation,—that clouds soon pass away: so also when the Lord chastises them with temporal punishment, he will presently return into favour with them. Hypocrites present the same outward appearance; but they widely differ from the faithful: for when the faithful promise to themselves a prosperous issue, they are at the same time touched with a sense of their own evils, and study to reconcile themselves to God; but hypocrites continue immersed in their vices and boldly despise God; and at the same time they flee here and there, and when any change happens they think that they have got rid of all evils. Inasmuch then as they deceived themselves with vain consolation, the Prophet now says, "You have no cause to think that it will be better with you, when one calamity shall pass away; for the same thing will happen to you, as when *one flees away from a lion and meets with a bear*, as when one escapes from a bear, and *betakes himself to his own house*, and there *a serpent* finds him: while he is leaning with his hand on the wall, a serpent bites him. Thus the Lord has in readiness various and many ways, by which he can punish you. When therefore ye shall have sustained one battle, when one enemy departs, the battle will be immediately renewed and that by another enemy: when a foreign power does not rage through the kingdom of Israel, the Lord will consume you either by famine, or by want, or by pestilence." We then see how well the context of the Prophet harmonises together.

"You have no reason," he says, "to hope for any light from the day of Jehovah." Why? "For Jehovah will not come, except when armed; for, as ye conduct yourselves in a hostile manner towards him, he must necessarily take vengeance. He will, therefore, bring with him no light, except it may be to fulminate against you: but his appearance will be dreadful, even darkness and thick darkness; and then, when he ceases to pursue you in one way, he will assail you in another; and, when foreign enemies spare you, God will find means by which he may destroy you in your own land without the agency of men; for ye have already found what the

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sterility of the land is, and what pestilence is: the Lord then has all such modes of vengeance in his own hand. Think not, therefore, that there will be any alleviation to you, were the world to change a hundred times, and were the condition of the country wholly different."

But the Prophet did not intend here to drive all those indiscriminately into despair, who were guilty of grievous offences, but his design was to shake off from hypocrites their self-flatteries, that by such proofs they might be led to know that God would be ever like himself. If, then, they wished to return into favour with him, he shows that a change was needful: when they put off their perverse conduct, God would be instantly ready to give them pardon; but, if they proceeded in their vices and obstinate wickedness, and always continued in that hardness, in which they had hitherto indulged, he declares, that the day of Jehovah would be ever to them dark and gloomy, and that, though the Lord does not always use the same kind of rod, he yet has means innumerable, by which he can destroy a perverse nation, such as the Israelites then were.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that seeing we are so sleepy, yea, so fascinated by our sins, that nothing is more difficult than to put off our own nature and to renounce that wickedness to which we have become habituated,—O grant, that we, being really awakened by thy scourgings, may truly return to thee, and that, having wholly changed our disposition and renounced all wickedness, we may sincerely, and from the heart, submit ourselves to thee, and so look forward to the coming of thy Son, that we may cheerfully and joyfully wait for him, by ever striving after such a renovation of life as may strip us of our flesh and all corruptions, until, being at length renewed after thine image, we become partakers of that glory, which has been obtained for us by the blood of the same, thy only-begotten Son. Amen.

Lecture Sixtieth.

21. I hate, I despise your feast-days, and I will not

21. Odi, reprobavi dies festos vestros, et non olfaciam in solennitatibus ves-

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smell in your solemn assemblies.

22. Though ye offer me burnt-offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept *them:* neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts.

23. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

tris (*alii legunt*, sacrificia vestra, et non olfaciam in congregationibus vestris; *sed de vocibus postea dicam suo loco.*)

22. Certè si obtuleritis mihi holocausta et munera vestra, grata non habebo: et pacifica pinguium vestrorum non respiciam.

23. Tolle à me multitudinem canticorum tuorum; et concertum lyrarum tuarum non audiam.

Here the Prophet, anticipating an objection, shows that the Israelites deceived themselves, for they believed that God was pacified by their sacrifices: he declares all these to be useless; not only, as I think, because they themselves were impure; but because all their sacrifices were mere profanations. We have said elsewhere that sacrifices are often reprehended by the Prophets, when not accompanied by godliness and sincerity: for why did God command sacrifices to be offered to him under the law, except as religious exercises? It was hence necessary that they should be accompanied with penitence and faith. But hypocrites thought, as we have seen, that they thereby discharged their whole duty: it was then a profanation of divine worship. Though the Jews, as to the external form, had not departed from the rule of the law, yet their sacrifices were vicious, and repudiated by God: "I cannot bear them—they are a weariness to me—I repudiate them—I loathe them,"—these are expressions we meet with every where in Isaiah. And yet hypocrites regarded their worship as conformable to the law; but impurity of heart vitiated all their works, and this was the reason that God rejected every thing which the Jews thought available for holiness. But different, as I think, was the design of our Prophet: for it was not only for this reason that he blamed the Israelites,—because they falsely pretended God's name in their sacrifices, but because they were apostates; for they had departed from the teaching of the law, and built for themselves a spurious temple.

It is yet true that they were deluded with this false notion, that their sins were expiated by sacrifices: but God reproved the Israelites, not only for this gross error, with which the

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Jews were also infected, but for having renounced his true and lawful worship. Hence the external form of their worship deserved to be condemned; for it was not right to offer sacrifices except on mount Zion: but they, without having the ark of the covenant, devised a worship elsewhere, and even there worshipped the calves. We now understand the design of the Prophet: and this ought to be carefully observed, for interpreters think that the Prophet had nothing else in view, but to condemn a false presumption in the Israelites, because they sought to satisfy God with external sacrifices, while they were yet continuing obstinately in their sins. But the other evil ought to be added, which was, that they had corrupted the true worship of God even in its outward form.

Having now pointed out the Prophet's object, I come to consider his words, *I have hated, I have rejected, &c.* The word חגג, *chegig*, means to leap and to dance: hence חג, *cheg*, signifies a sacrifice as well as a festal day. Some then render the words, "I have rejected your sacrifices," and those which follow, thus, "I will not smell at your solemnities." Others render the last word, "assemblies." עצר, *otser*, means to restrain, and sometimes to gather: hence עצרה, *otsare*, means an assembly or a congregation. But עצרת, *otseret*, means a festal day, because the people, as it is well known, were then restrained from work, and also, because they were detained in the sanctuary. But with respect to the subject itself, it makes but little difference, whether we read assembly or a festal day: we see that what the Prophet meant was this,—that God rejected all the rites, by which the Israelites thought that he was pacified, as though they were the most effectual expiations. He does not simply declare that they were of no account before God; but he speaks much stronger and says, that God despised and abhorred them. *I regard*, he says, *with hatred your festal days.* He speaks also of burnt-offerings, *When ye offer me sacrifices and your gift, &c.* מנחה, *meneche*, properly means a gift of flour, which was an addition to the sacrifice; but it is often taken generally for any kind of offering. It is indeed certain that the Prophet meant, that however much the Israelites accumulated their ritual

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observances, they did nothing towards appeasing God, inasmuch as they observed not the law that was given them; and they turned also to a wrong purpose their sacrifices; for they did not exercise themselves in piety and in the spiritual worship of God, but, on the contrary, spread veils before God, that by presenting a fictitious form of worship, they might cover all their sins; for they thought themselves to be hidden from God.

This is the reason why the Prophet declares that these offerings would not be received by God, לֹא אֶרְצֶה, *la aretse, I will not accept* them. The Prophet no doubt alludes here to those promises, which are to be found everywhere in the law, as he did when he said in the last verse, לֹא אָרִיחַ, *la arich, I will not smell.* רוּחַ, *ruch,* means to smell; and Moses often uses the expression, that God is delighted with the odour of sacrifices, or with the smell of incense. But when the Lord declares that odour is pleasant to him, he means that it is so, provided the people sacrificed rightly, that is, when they brought not sacrifices as false veils to cover their sins, but as true and real evidences of their faith and repentance; God promised in that case that sacrifices would be a sweet odour to him. Now, on the contrary, he declares that the perfume would not be acceptable to him, nor sacrifices appeasing. But sacrifices not only were acceptable to God, but also pacified him. Since then the Lord had so often said, that he would be propitious to his people, when sacrifices were offered, it was necessary expressly to cut off this confidence from the Israelites, when they dealt not faithfully with God. God never disappointed his true worshippers, but ever received them into favour, provided they approached him in sincerity. But as these hypocrites dealt falsely with him, they were necessarily disappointed of their hope, as the Prophet here declares.

The peace-offerings of your fat things, he says, *I will not regard.* God indeed promised in the law that he would regard their sacrifices, provided they were lawful; but as the Israelites had in two ways departed from pure worship, God now justly says, *I will not look on your sacrifices, nor on the peace-offerings of your fat things.* He calls them the peace-

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offerings of fat things, intimating, that though the beasts were the choicest, they would not yet be acceptable to him; for the Lord regards not fatness, as he needs neither meat nor drink. Then, in a word, the Prophet here sets this fatness in opposition to true godliness and obedience too. In both respects there was, as we have seen, a defect among the Israelites; for they obeyed not the law as to its outward requirements, and their hearts were impure and perverse: hence all their sacrifices were necessarily polluted and corrupt.

It follows, *Take away from me the multitude of thy songs.* By speaking of multitude, he aims at hypocrites, who toil much in their devices without measure or end, as we see done at this day by those under the Papacy; for they accumulate endless forms of worship, and greatly weary themselves, morning and evening; in short, they spend days and nights in performing their ceremonies, and every one devises some new thing, and all these they heap together. Inasmuch, then, as men, when they have begun to turn aside from the pure word of God, continually invent various kinds of trifles, the Prophet here touches indirectly on this foolish laboriousness (*stultum sedulitatem*—foolish sedulity) when he says, *Take away from me the multitude of thy songs.* He might have simply said, "Thy songs please me not;" but he mentions their multitude, because hypocrites, as I have said, fix no limits to their outward ceremonies: and a vast heap especially follows, when once they take to themselves the liberty of devising this or that form of worship. Hence God testifies here, that they spend labour in vain, for he rejects what he does not command, and whatever is not rightly offered to him.

And the harmony of lyres, or of musical instruments. But נבל, *nabel*, was an instrument, which, as to its kind, is unknown to us now. *Take away*, then, *from me the harmony of lyres;* for the verb, *take away*, may refer to both clauses; though some join them to the last the verb לא אשמע, *la ashimo, I will not hear.* The difference really is very little: but their view is the most probable, who join together the two clauses, 'Take away from me the multitude of thy songs and the harmony of lyres;' with which thou thinkest me to be delighted. They afterwards take לא אשמע, "I will not

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hear," by itself. But I contend not about such minute things: it is enough to know the design of the Prophet. It now follows—

24. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.	24. Et decurret quasi aquæ judicium, et justitia quasi torrens violentus.

Interpreters variously expound this verse. To some it seems an exhortation, as though the Prophet said, "Ye thrust on me victims of beasts and various ceremonies; but I regard not these things; for the interior purity of heart alone pleases me: take away then all these things, which are of no moment with me, and bring what I especially require and demand, even a pure and sincere heart."

Some also think that newness of life is here described by its fruits or its evidences: for the Prophet mentions not purity, speaks not of faith and repentance, but by the fruits sets forth that renovation, which God always chiefly regards, and for the sake of which he had required sacrifices under the law. The meaning then is, that hypocrites are here recalled to true worship, because they vainly and absurdly tormented themselves with their own fictions: and by requiring from them righteousness and judgment, he required a holy and pure life, or, in a word, uprightness.

Others think that the Prophet turns aside here to celebrate the grace of Christ, which was to be made known in the gospel: and the verb יִגַּל, *igel*, is rendered by many, "shall be revealed;" but others more correctly derive it from the root גָּל, *gal*, to roll. Let justice then, as it were, roll. But I will return to the second exposition. Most think that there is here a prediction of that righteousness, which God was to make known by the coming of Christ; and some retain also the proper meaning of the verb גָּל, *gal*, to roll. They then say that the gospel is here compared to an impetuous river and a violent stream, because the Lord would rush on and penetrate through all hinderances, how many soever Satan might attempt to throw in his way. But this meaning seems not to harmonise with the Prophet's words, and is, in my judgment, too refined.

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Some again regard the verse as a threatening, and think that God here reproves the Israelites, as though he had said, that since they were trifling with and mocking him, he would at length show what was true righteousness and what was true judgment: for hypocrites think that they come not short of a perfect state, when they are veiled by their ceremonies, inasmuch as they flee to these lurking holes, when they would cover all their flagitious deeds. Hence they think not that they are guilty, for they hide their sins under their ceremonies as under Ajax's shield. Seeing then that they thus trifle with God, some interpreters think that God here sharply reproves them and says, that they were greatly deceived, for he would himself at length make known what was true righteousness. Righteousness then shall run down or be rolled; and by this verb he expresses impetuosity; but he sets it forth afterwards more clearly by אֵיתָן, *aitan*, "Judgment shall be a violent stream." But hypocrites amuse themselves, as children do with their puppets. Inasmuch then as they do nothing seriously, and yet desire to pacify God as with baubles, the Prophet here shakes off such delusions, as though he said, "Do you think that God is like a child? Why do you set up these trifles? Do you think that righteousness is a fictitious thing, or that judgment is a vain figment? The Lord will certainly show to you how precious righteousness is. *It shall* therefore *run down* as violent *waters*, as an impetuous *stream*. Judgment," he says, "shall rush upon you and overwhelm you." This is the third meaning.

But the verse may be again explained in a different way, as though God obviated an objection; for hypocrites, we know, always raise a clamour, and make no end of contending; "What! Have we then lost all our labour, while endeavouring to worship God? Is all this to go for nothing? And further, we have not only offered sacrifices, but sought also to testify that the glory of God is to us an object of concern. Since then we have had a care for religion, why should God now reject us?" The Prophet here shortly answers,—that if only they brought forth true righteousness, their course would be free; as though he said, "God will not put a check

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to your righteousness and rectitude:" and this must be referred to the fruit or remuneration; as though the Prophet said, "Only worship God in sincerity, and he will not disappoint you; for a reward will be laid up for you; your righteousness shall run down as a river." As it is said in another place, 'Your righteousness shall shine as the dawn;' so it is also in this, 'Your righteousness shall run down as violent waters.' There was therefore no reason for hypocrites to expostulate and say that wrong was done them by God, or that their performances were lightly esteemed, since God openly testified, that he would provide for righteousness, that it might have a free course, like an impetuous river: and this seems to be the genuine meaning of the Prophet. While I do not wholly reject the other expositions, I do not yet follow them; but show what I mostly approve.[1]

Then the Prophet, after having bidden them to throw aside all their fictitious and spurious forms of worship, does not now simply exhort the Israelites, as some think, to exhibit righteousness and rectitude, but expresses this in the form of a promise, "Run down shall your righteousness as impetuous waters, provided it be true, and not an empty name. Whenever God shall see in you sincere rectitude, there will certainly be prepared an ample reward for you." It follows—

25. Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?	25. An victimas et munus (*est*, מנחה) obtulistis mihi in deserto quadraginta annis, domus Israel?

[1] There appears here a great candour in our Author: but the first view of the passage seems the most natural and obvious, as presented in our version, with which that of *Newcome* and *Henderson* agrees. Having before exhorted them to "take away" what they thought much of, the Prophet now exhorts them to attend to judgment and justice. The two verses, 23 and 24, may be thus rendered:—

23. Remove from me the multitude of thy songs,
And the music of thy harps; I will not hear *them:*
24. And let judgment roll down like waters,
And righteousness like a mighty stream.

I prefer rendering המון, "multitude," with Calvin, rather than "noise," with our version and *Newcome*, or "sound" with *Henderson*. It forms a variety as to the next clause. In idiomatic English the expressions would be—"thy many songs and thy harmonious harps." The two verses ought to be read as connected; and the 24th should begin with "And," ו, and not "But."—*Ed.*

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26. But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves.

26. Et sustulistis Sicuth Regem vestrum, et Chion, imagines vestras, stellam deorum vestrorum (*vel*, deos vestros,) quæ fecistis vobis.

The Prophet shows in this place, that he not only reproved hypocrisy in the Israelites in obtruding on God only external display of ceremonies without any true religion in the heart; but that he also condemned them for having departed from the rule of the law. He also shows that this was not a new disease among the people of Israel; for immediately at the beginning their fathers mixed such a leaven as vitiated the worship of God. He therefore proves that the Israelites had ever been given to superstitions, and could not by any means be retained in the true and pure worship of God.

Have ye then caused *sacrifices*, victims, or an oblation to come before me in the desert for forty years? He addresses them as though *they* had perverted God's worship in the desert, and yet they were born many ages after; what does he mean? Even this,—the Prophet includes the whole body of the people from their first beginning, as though he said, "It is right to inclose you in the same bundle with your fathers; for you are the same with your fathers in your ways and dispositions." We hence see that the Israelites were regarded guilty, not only because they vitiated God's worship in one age by their superstitions, but also from the beginning. And he asks whether they offered victims to him: it is certain that such was their intention; for they at no time dared to deny God, by whom they had been not long before delivered; and we know that though they made for themselves many things condemned by the law, they ever adhered to this principle, "The God, who hath redeemed us, is to be worshipped by us:" yea, they always proudly boasted of their father Abraham. They had never then willingly alienated themselves from God, who had chosen Abraham their father and themselves to be his people: and indeed the Prophet shortly before had said, 'Take away from me,' &c.; and then, 'when ye offer to me sacrifices and a gift of flour, I will not count them acceptable.' There seems to be an inconsistency in this—that God should deny that victims

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had been offered to him—and yet say that they were offered to him by the people of Israel, when, as we have stated, they had presumptuously built a profane and spurious altar. The solution is easy, and it is even this,—that the people had ever offered sacrifices to God, if we regard what they pretended to do: for good intention, as it is commonly called, so blinds the superstitious, that with great presumption they trifle with God. Hence with respect to them we may say that they sacrificed to God; but as to God, he denies that what was not purely offered was offered to him. We now then see why God says now, that sacrifices were not offered to him in the wilderness: he says so, because the people blended with his worship the leaven of idolatry: and God abhorred this depravation. This is the meaning.

But another objection may be again proposed. This defection did not prevail long, and the whole people did not give their consent to idolatry; and still more, we know what the impostor Balaam said, that Jacob had no idol; and speaking in the twentieth chapter of Numbers, by the prophetic spirit, he testifies that the only true God reigned in Jacob, and that there were among them no false gods. How then does the Prophet say now that idolatry prevailed among them? The answer is ready: The greater part went astray: hence the whole people are justly condemned; and though this sin was reproved, yet they relapsed continually, as it is well known, into superstitions; and still more, they worshipped strange gods to please strumpets. Since it was so, it is no wonder that they are accused here by the Prophet of not having offered victims to God, inasmuch as they were contaminated with impure superstitions: it could not then be, that they brought anything to God. At the same time God's worship, required by his law, was of such importance, that he declared that he was worshipped by Jacob, as also Christ says, "We know what we worship," (John iv. 22;) and yet not one in a hundred among the Jews cherished the hope of eternal life in his heart. They were all Epicureans or profane; nay, the Sadducees prevailed openly among them: the whole of religion was fallen, or was at least so decayed, that there was no holiness and no integrity among

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them; and yet Christ says, "We know what we worship;" and this was true with regard to the law.

Now then we see that the Prophets speak in various ways of Israel: when they regard the people, they say, that they were perfidious, that they were apostates, who had immediately from the beginning departed from the true and legitimate worship of God: but when they commend the grace of God, they say, that the true worship of God shone among them, that though the whole multitude had become perverted, yet the Lord approved of what he had commanded. So it is with Baptism; it is a sacred and immutable testimony of the grace of God, though it were administered by the devil, though all who may partake of it were ungodly and polluted as to their own persons. Baptism ever retains its own character, and is never contaminated by the vices of men. The same must be said of sacrifices.

I shall now return to the words of the Prophet:[1] *Have*

[1] No commentator has given us a satisfactory rendering of these two verses. Perhaps that of Calvin, as a whole, comes nearest to the original. The question, *Have ye*, &c., is considered by many as not implying a negation but a concession, as though it had been said, "I grant this; ye did offer," &c.; and then, what is said in verse 26 was what they did besides. It was this mixture of two worships, the worship of God and the worship of idols, that is here brought against the Israelites. I venture to present the following translation:—

> Did you bring me sacrifices and oblation in the wilderness
> For forty years, O house of Israel?
> You did also bear Sacut, your king,
> And Kiun, *which were* your images;
> A star *was* your god,
> Which ye formed for yourselves.

That the hosts of heaven were the objects of their worship, is evident from Stephen's Sermon in Acts vii. 42, "Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven." Stephen then refers to, and quotes this passage, not from the Hebrew, but almost literally from the Septuagint. Instead of, "their figures which ye have made for yourselves," he has, "figures which ye made to worship them." He gives the meaning, but not the words.

Between the words of Amos, in Hebrew, and those of Stephen, there is a material, though not a verbal agreement. Two objects of idolatrous worship are mentioned, and also their images, but their names are different. The probability is, that those used by Amos were not current at the time the Greek version was made, and that the names by which those deities were then known were used. Moloch, indeed, means a king, but applied, like Baal, to several heathen gods; and Kiun is said

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you offered to me victims for forty years in the desert? He enhances their sin by the circumstance of their condition; for they were there shut up in a narrow and hard confinement, and yet they turned aside after their superstitions. And it was certainly a monstrous thing: God fed them daily with manna; they were therefore under the necessity, however unwilling, of looking up to heaven every day; for God constrained their unwillingness with no common favour. They knew, too, that water flowed for them miraculously from a rock. Seeing then that God constrained them thus to look up to him, how was it that they yet became vain through their own deceptions? It was, as I have said, a prodigious blindness. Hence the Prophet speaks of the forty years and of the desert, that the atrocity of their sin might more fully appear; for the Lord could not, by so many bonds, keep the people from such a madness.

It now follows, *And ye have carried Sicuth your king.* This place, we know, is quoted by Stephen in the seventh chapter of the Acts: but he followed the Greek version; and the Greek translator, whoever he was, was mistaken as to the word, Sicuth, and read, Sucoth, and thought the name an appellative of the plural number, and supposed it to be derived from סוך, *suk*, which means a tabernacle; for he translated it σκήνην, as if it was said, "Ye bore the tabernacle of your king instead of the ark." But it was a manifest mistake; for the probability is, that Sicuth was the proper name of an idol. *Ye bore* then *Sicuth your king.* He called it their king by way of reproach; for they had violated that priestly kingdom, which God had instituted; for he, as a king, exercised dominion over them. Since then God would be deemed the king of Israel, as he had ascribed to himself that name, and since he promised to them a kingdom, as in due time he gave them, it was the basest ingratitude in them to seek an idol to be their king; it was indeed a denial of God which could not be borne, not to allow themselves to be governed by him. We hence see how sharply he upbraids them, for

to be Arabic, and Remphan is an Egyptic term, designating the same star or planet, which critics suppose to have been Saturn. Moloch, as Grotius suggests, had the figure of a king, and Kiun that of a star.

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they had refused to God his own kingdom, and created for themselves the fictitious Sicuth as their king.

Then it follows, *And Kiun, your images.* Some think that כיון, *Kiun*, means a cake, and כוה, *kue*, is to burn, and from this they think the word is derived; but others more correctly regard it as a proper name; and the Prophet, I have no doubt, has named here some feigned god after Sicuth. *Kiun* then, *your images;* I read the words as being in apposition. Others say, "The cake of your images;" and some render the words literally, "Kiun your images;" but yet they do not sufficiently attend to the design of the Prophet; for he seems here to ridicule the madness of the people, because they dreamt that some deity was inclosed in statues and in such masks. "Ye carried," he says, "both Sicuth and Kiun, your images. I am now deprived of honour, for ye could not bear me to govern you. Ye now enjoy your King Sicuth; but, in the meantime, let us see what is the power of Sicuth and Kiun; they are nothing more than images. Seeing then that there is neither strength nor even life in them, what madness is it to worship such fictitious things?"

But some think that Kiun was the image of Saturn. What the Hebrews indeed say, that this idolatry was derived from the Persians, is wholly groundless; for the Persians, we know, had no images nor statues, but worshipped only the sacred fire. As, then, the Persians had no images, the Jews fabled, in their usual way, when they said that Kiun was an image of Saturn. But all the Jews, I have no doubt, imagined that all the stars were gods, as they made images for them; for it immediately follows, *A constellation*, or a star, *your gods*. These, he says, are your gods; even stars and images; and there is here a sarcasm (σαρκασμος) used; for the Prophet derides the folly of the people of Israel, who, being not content with the Maker of heaven and earth, sought for themselves dead gods, or rather vain devices. "Your gods then," he says, "are images and stars."

But it must be observed, that he calls them images: he does not, as in other places, call them idols; and this, I say, ought to be observed, for here is refuted the foolish and

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puerile refinement of the Papists, who at this day excuse all their superstitions, because they have no idols; for they deny that their devices are idols. What then? They are images. Thus they hide their own baseness under the name of images. But the Prophet does not say that they were idols; he does not use that hateful word which is derived from grief or sorrow; but he says that they were images. The name then in itself has nothing base or ominous; but, at the same time, as the Lord would not have himself represented by any visible figure, the Prophet here expressly and distinctly condemns Sicuth and Kiun. The Greek translator whom Stephen followed, put down the word, types or figures, that is, images. Now, when any one says to the Papists that their figures or images are sinful before God, they boldly deny this; but we see that their evasion avails nothing.

He adds in the last place, *Which ye have made for yourselves.* I prefer rendering the relative אשר, *asher*, in the neuter gender, as including all their fictitious gods, and also their images, *which things* then *ye have made for yourselves.* To make these things is at all times vicious in sacred things; for we ought not to bring any thing of our own when we worship God, but we ought to depend always on the word of his mouth, and to obey what he has commanded. All our actions then in the worship of God ought to be, so to speak, passive; for they ought to be referred to his command, lest we attempt any thing but what he approves. Hence, when men dare to do this or that without God's command, it is nothing else but abomination before him. And the Greeks call superstitions ἐθελοθρησκείας; and this word means voluntary acts of worship, such as are undertaken by men of their own accord. We now understand the whole design of the Prophet. It follows—

27. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name *is* the God of hosts.

27. Et migrare faciam vos ultra Damascum, dicit Jehova, Deus exercituum nomen ejus.

Here the Prophet at last denounces exile on the Israelites, as though he had said that God would not suffer them any

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longer to contaminate the Holy Land, which had been given them as an heritage, on the condition that they acknowledged him as the only true God. God had now, for a long time, borne with the Israelites, though they had never ceased to pollute his land with superstitions. He comes now to cleanse it. *I will cause you*, he says, *to migrate beyond Damascus*;[1] for they thought that enemies were driven, by means of that fortress, from the whole country, and they took shelter there as in a quiet nest. The expression would have otherwise no meaning, and this is what interpreters have not noticed. They say, "I will cause you to migrate beyond Damascus," that is, to a far country; but why did the Prophet mention Damascus? This reason ought to be observed. It was because the Israelites thought that all the attacks of enemies would be prevented by having the city Damascus as their defence, which they supposed was impregnable. "That fortress," the Lord says, "will not prevent me from taking you away, and removing you as far as the Assyrians." We now see what the Prophet means, and why he expressly added the name of Damascus.

It follows, *The God of hosts is his name.*[2] Here the Prophet confirms his threatening, lest hypocrites should think that he did not speak in earnest: for we know how readily they flattered themselves; and when the Lord fulminated, they remained secure. Hence the Prophet, that he might strike terror, says, that the speaker is *the God of hosts*, as though he said, "Ye cannot hope to escape the vengeance which God now denounces on you; for his power is infinite, he is the Lord of hosts. See then that he is prepared to destroy you except ye timely repent." This is the meaning. I will not now proceed farther.

[1] Here is another instance in which the meaning, and not the words, is given by Stephen in Acts vii. 43. In this instance, the Septuagint is the same with the Hebrew text, "beyond Damascus;" but Stephen says, "beyond Babylon." The same quarter is meant, though the name of the place is different.—*Ed.*

[2] There seems to be a peculiar propriety in introducing this sentence. The Israelites became the worshippers of the hosts of heaven; then the Prophet says, that Jehovah is the *God of hosts*. What folly, then, it was to worship the hosts of heaven, and to forsake the God of them!—*Ed.*

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PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou seest us to be so prone to corrupt superstitions, and that we are with so much difficulty restrained by thy word,—O grant, that we being confirmed by thy Spirit, may never turn aside either to the right hand or to the left, but be ever attentive to thee alone, and not worship thee presumptuously, nor pollute thy worship with our outward pomps, but call on thee with a sincere heart, and, recumbing on thy aid, flee to thee in all our necessities, and never abuse thy holy name, which thou hast designed to be engraven on us, but be conformed to the image of thy Son, that thou mayest be to us truly a Father, and that we may be thy children, in the name of the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER VI.

Lecture Sixty-first.

1. Woe to them *that are* at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, *which are* named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!

1. Væ securis in Sion et confidentibus in monte Samaria, qui celebres fuerunt principio gentium, et ingressi sunt ad illos domus Israel.

The Prophet now directs his discourse not only to the Israelites, to whom he was especially given as an instructor and teacher, but includes the Jews also: and yet he addresses not all indiscriminately, but only the chief men, who were intent on their pleasures, as though they were exempt from the common miseries: for he does not, as many suppose, reprove here luxury and pride only; but we must remember a fact connected with their case,—that they were not awakened by God's judgments; when God severely punished the sins of the people, the chief men remained ever heedlessly in their own dregs. This security is now condemned by our Prophet.

And this is a very common evil, as we may see, in the present day. For when the Lord afflicts a country with war or with famine, the rich make great gain of such evils. They abuse the scourges of God; for we see merchants getting rich in the midst of wars, inasmuch as they scrape together a booty

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from every quarter. For they who carry on war are forced to borrow money, and also the peasants and mechanics, that they may pay taxes; and then, that they may live, they are obliged to make unjust conditions: thus the rich increase in wealth. They also who are in authority, and in favour at the court of princes, make more gain in wars, in famine, and in other calamities, than during times of peace and prosperity: for when peace flourishes, the state of things is then more equable; but when the poor are burdened, the rest grow fat. And this is the evil now noticed by the Prophet.

Hence he pronounces here a curse on the secure and those at ease; not that it is an evil thing, or in itself displeasing to God, when any one quietly enjoys his leisure; but, not to be moved, when the Lord openly shows himself to be displeased and angry, when his scourges are manifestly inflicted, but to indulge ourselves more in pleasures,—this is to provoke him, as it were, designedly. The secure, then, and the presumptuous the Prophet here condemns, for it became them to humble themselves when they saw that God was incensed against them. They were not indeed more just than the multitude; and when God treated the common people with such severity, ought not the chiefs to have looked to themselves, and have examined their own life? As they did not do this, but made themselves drunk with pleasures, and put far off every fear and thought that the scourges of God were nothing to them,—this was a contempt deservedly condemned by the Prophet. We see that God was in the same manner greatly displeased, as it is recorded in Isaiah: when he called them to mourning, they sang with the harp, and, according to their custom, feasted sumptuously and joyfully, (Isa. xxii. 12.) As then they thus persevered in their indulgences, the Lord became extremely angry; for it was, as though they avowedly despised him and scorned all his threatenings.

We now observe the design of the Prophet, which interpreters have not sufficiently noticed. It behoves us indeed ever to keep in view these scourges of God, by which he began to visit the sins of the people. God can by no means endure, as I have said, such a contumacy as this,—that men should go on in the indulgence of their sins, and never regard

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their judge and feel no guilt. Hence the Prophet says, *Woe to you who are secure in Zion, who are confident*, that is, who are without any fear, *on the mount of Samaria.*[1] He names here the mount of Zion and the mount of Samaria; for these were the chief cities of the two kingdoms, as we all know. The whole country had been laid waste with various calamities; the citizens of Jerusalem and of Samaria were, at the same time, wealthy; and then, trusting in their strongholds, they despised God and all his judgments. This then was the security, full of contumacy, which is condemned by the Prophet.

He then mentions their ingratitude: he says that these mountains had been celebrated from the beginning of the nations, and that the Israelites entered into them. God here upbraids both the Jews and Israelites with having come to a foreign possession: for they had got those cities, not by their own valour, but the Lord drove out before them the ancient inhabitants. Seeing then that they perceived not that a safe dwelling was given them there by the Lord, that they might purely worship him and submit to his government, their ingratitude was inexcusable. The Prophet then, after having inveighed against the gross and heedless security, with which the chiefs of both kingdoms were inebriated, now mentions their ingratitude: "Ye are not natives, but ye have come in, for God did go before you, for it was his will to give you this land as your possession: why then are you now so inflated with pride against him? For before your time these cities were certainly well known and celebrated; and yet this was

[1] "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion,
And to them that are secure in the mountain of Samaria."
—*Dr Henderson.*

From not considering the main drift of what follows in this chapter, critics have proposed emendations in this verse. The careless and the secure, both at Jerusalem and Samaria, are evidently meant. Newcome renders the last line nearly the same with Henderson—

"And that rest secure in the mountain of Samaria."

So that the word "trust" in our version is not correct. The word used means often to be confident or secure, as well as to trust; but the law of parallelism requires it to be in the former sense here; as they were at ease in Zion, so they were confident or secure on the mount of Samaria. —*Ed.*

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of no avail to the natives themselves. Why then do ye not now fear the Lord's judgment and repent, when he threatens you? Yea, when he shows his scourges to you?" We now perceive the Prophet's meaning in this verse. It now follows—

2. Pass ye into Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great: then go down to Gath of the Philistines: *be they* better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border?	2. Transite Chalneh et aspicite; ite illinc in Chamath magnam, et descendite in Gath Philistinorum; an meliores sint regnis istis? an terminus illorum major termino vestro?

By this representation Amos shows that there was no excuse for the Jews or the Israelites for sleeping in their sins, inasmuch as they could see, as it were in a mirror, the judgments which God brought on heathen nations. It is a singular favour, when God teaches us at the expense of others: for he could justly punish us as soon as we transgress; but this he does not, on the contrary he spares us; and at the same time he sets others before us as examples. This is, as we have said, a singular favour: and this is the mode of teaching which our Prophet now adopts. He says, that Calneh and Hamath, and Gath, were remarkable evidences of God's wrath, by which the Israelites might learn, that they had no reason to rest on their wealth, to rely on their fortresses, and to think themselves free from all dangers; for as God had destroyed these cities, which seemed impregnable, so he could also cut off Jerusalem and Samaria, whenever he pleased. This is the real meaning of the Prophet.

Some read the sentence negatively, "Are not these places better than your kingdoms?" But this is not consistent with the Prophet's words. Others attend not to the object of the Prophet; for they think that the blessings of God are here compared, as though he said, "God deals more liberally with you than with the Chaldeans, the Assyrians, and the neighbouring nations." For Calneh was situated in the plain of Babylon, as it is evident from Gen. x.; and Hamath was also a celebrated city, mentioned in that chapter, and in many other places; and Gath was a renowned city of the Philistines. In this opinion therefore interpreters mostly agree; that is, that there is set forth here God's bounty to the Jews and

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Israelites, seeing that he had favoured them with a rich and fertile country, and preferred them to other nations. But this view seems not to me to be the correct one; for when a comparison is made between Calneh and Jerusalem, Babylon was no doubt the more fruitful and the more pleasant country, as we learn from all histories. The Prophet then does not speak here of the ancient condition of these places, but shows, as I have already said, that it availed these cities nothing, that they were wealthy, that they were fortified by all kinds of defences; for God, at last, executed vengeance on them. Hence the Prophet declares that the same was now nigh the Jews and the Israelites.

"What will hinder the hand of God," he says, "from delivering you to destruction? For if men could have arrested God's wrath by any fortresses, certainly Calneh and Hamath, and Gath, would have resisted by their forces; but the Lord has yet executed his vengeance on these cities, though fortified; your confidence then is nothing but infatuation, which deceives you." Jeremiah uses a similar language, when he says, 'Go to Shiloh,' (Jer. vii. 12.) He certainly does not remind the Jews, that the Lord had more splendidly adorned them than Shiloh; but he had quite a different thing in view. Shiloh had indeed been eminent, for it had long afforded a dwelling to the ark of the covenant; the sanctuary of God had been there. But at that time the place was deserted; and Jeremiah sets before the eyes of the people its sad desolation, that they might know that they ought to dread the same event, except they repented; for if they hardened their necks, nothing could prevent God from dealing with them as he did before with the inhabitants of Shiloh.

We now then perceive the meaning of the Prophet, when he says, Go and *pass into Calneh, and see.* In bidding them to *see*, he no doubt refers to the dreadful change which had taken place there. For Calneh had been a strongly fortified city, and possessed supreme power; and the neighbouring country was also no less pleasant than fruitful: but it was now a solitary place; for Babylon, as it is well known, had swallowed up Calneh. Since then the place afforded such a spectacle, the Prophet rightly says, *Pass over into Calneh, and*

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see; that is, consider, as in a mirror, what men can gain by their pride and haughtiness, when they harden themselves against God: for this was the cause of destruction to that celebrated city.

From thence, he says, *go to Hamath,* רבה, *rebe,* the great; which was a well-known city of Assyria; and see there, "How has it happened that a city so famous was entirely overthrown, except that the Lord could not endure so great a perverseness? As they had abused his patience, he at length executed his vengeance. The same thing also happened to your neighbours." For the Jews and the Israelites were not far distant from Gath. Now then since there were so many evidences of God's wrath before their eyes, justly does the Prophet here inveigh against their want of thought, inasmuch as they feared not God's judgment, which was nigh at hand.

Are they then *better?* that is, is the condition of these cities better than that of the two kingdoms, Judah and Israel? and then, *Is their border larger than your border?* They have indeed been reduced to such straits, that they even pay tribute for their houses, whereas formerly they occupied a wide extent of country, and ruled, as it were, with extended wings, far and wide: but God has taken away those territories: for all these cities are become tributaries. See, he says, Is their border larger than your border? It now follows—

3. Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near.	3. Qui procul rejicitis diem malum, et appropinquatis solium violentiæ.

The Prophet here reproves the Jews and Israelites for another crime,—that they had often provoked God's wrath, and ceased not by their sins to call forth new punishments, and in the meantime rejected, through their haughtiness and obstinacy, all his threatenings, as if they were vain, and would never be executed on them. We must ever remember what I have said before,—that the Prophet speaks not here of the whole people, but of the chiefs; for the expression, that they *drew nigh the throne of iniquity,* could not have been applied to the common people. This discourse then was addressed

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particularly to the judges and counsellors, and those who were in power in both kingdoms, in Judah as well as in Israel.

But it is a remarkable saying, that they *drove far off the evil day*, while they *drew nigh the throne of iniquity*, or of violence; as though he said, "Ye seek for yourselves a fever by your intemperance, and yet ye drive it far off, as drunken men are wont to do, who swallow down wine without any moderation; and when a physician comes, or one more moderate, and warns them not to indulge in excess, they ridicule all their forebodings: 'What! will a fever seize on me? I am wholly free from fever; I am indeed accustomed to drink wine.'" Such are ungodly men, when they provoke God's wrath as it were designedly, and at the same time scorn all threatenings, as though they were safe through some special privilege. We now then see what the Prophet had in view by saying, that they *drove far the evil day*, and yet *drew nigh the throne of iniquity*. He means, that they drew nigh the throne of iniquity, when the judges strengthened themselves in their tyranny, and took the liberty to steal, to rob, to plunder, to oppress. When therefore they thus hardened themselves in all kinds of licentiousness, they then drew nigh the throne of iniquity. And they put away the evil day, because they were touched by no alarm; for when the Prophets denounced God's vengeance, they regarded it as a fable.

In short, Amos charges here the principal men of the two kingdoms with two crimes,—that they ceased not to provoke continually the wrath of God by subverting and casting under foot all equity, and by ruling the people in a tyrannical and haughty manner—and that, in the meantime, they heedlessly despised all threatenings, prolonged time, and promised impunity to themselves: even when God seriously and sharply addressed them, they still thought that the evil day was not nigh. Passages of this kind meet us everywhere in the Prophets, in which they show their indignation at this kind of heedlessness, when hypocrites, putting off every feeling of grief, as though they had fascinated themselves, laughed to scorn all the Prophets, because they thought that the hand of God was

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far removed from them. Thus they are spoken of by Isaiah, as saying, 'Let us eat and drink, since we must die,' (Isa. xxii. 13.) They indeed thought that the Prophets did not seriously threaten them; but they regarded the mention of a near destruction as an empty bugbear. We now then understand what the Prophet meant. It follows—

4. That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall.

4. Qui decumbunt (*vel*, dormiunt) in lectis eburneis et se extendunt super strata sua (*alii vertunt*, et superflua; *alii*, induti sunt tiaris; *sed utrumque mihi videtur coactum*,) qui comedunt agnos è grege (*hoc est*, selectos) et vitulos è medio saginarii (*vel*, opimi pascui; *nam* מרבק *quidam ita vertunt*.)

Amos still pursues the reproof we have noticed at the beginning of the chapter,—that the chief men, of whom he speaks, cast away from them all cares and anxieties, and indulged in pleasures, while the whole country was miserably distressed. We must ever bear in mind what I have already said,—that luxury is not simply reprehended by the Prophet, as some incorrectly think, without sufficiently considering what is said, for it is not what the Prophet treats of; but he upbraids the Israelites for setting up an iron neck against God's judgments, yea, for shamelessly trifling with God, while he was endeavouring to lead them by degrees to repentance. The Prophet complains that nothing availed with them.

He then says, first, that they *slept on ivory beds*. To use ivory beds was not in itself bad, except that excess is ever to be condemned; for, when we give up ourselves to pomps and pleasures, we certainly are not then free from sin: indeed, every desire for present things, which exceeds moderation, is ever justly reprehensible. And when men greedily seek splendour and display, or become ambitious and proud, or are given to delicacies, they are guilty of vices ever condemned by God. But it might be, that one used an ivory bed, who was yet willing to lie on the ground: for we know that there was then a great abundance of ivory, and that it was commonly used in Asia. Italy formerly knew not what it was to use a bed of ivory, that is, before the victory of Lucius Scipio: but

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after the king Antiochus was conquered, then Italy freely used ivory beds and fineries; and thus luxury broke down their courage and effeminated them.

I will come now to our Prophet: it might have been that ivory was not then so valuable in Judea: they might then have used ivory beds without blame. But Amos ever regards the miseries of those times. The rich then ought to have given up all their luxuries, and to have betaken themselves to dust and ashes, when they saw that God was incensed with them, when they saw that the fire of his vengeance was kindled. We now then perceive why Amos was so indignant against those who slept on ivory beds.

He adds, *And who extend themselves on their beds:* for סָרַח, *sarech*, is properly to extend; it means also to become fœtid; and further, it means to be superfluous; and therefore some render the words, "upon ivory beds and superfluities;" but this is strained, and agrees not with what follows, *upon their couches.* The Prophet then, I have no doubt, points out here the manners of those who so heedlessly indulged themselves: "Ye extend," he says, "your legs and your arms on your couches, as idle men, accustomed to indulgences, are wont to do. But the Lord will awaken you in a new way; his scourges ought to have roused you, but ye remain asleep. Hence, since God could not terrify you by his rods, nothing more remains but to draw you forth against your will to be punished." This was the reason why the Prophet said that they extended themselves on their couches.

Ye eat also the lambs from the flock, and the calves from the midst of the rich pasture, or of the stall. I prefer taking מִרְבָּק, *merebek*, for folds. Since then they loved fat meat, the Prophet reproves this luxury: he had indeed in view, as it has been already said, the then calamitous time; for if the rich had in their usual way feasted, and had even taken fat meat, they would not have deserved so severe a punishment: but when the Lord called them to mourning, and when the signals of his wrath spread horror all around, it was a stupidity not to be endured, for them to continue their indulgences, which they ought, on the contrary, to have renounced.

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Indeed, this passage agrees with that of Isaiah, to which I have already referred. It now follows—

5. That chant to the sound of the viol, *and* invent to themselves instruments of music like David.	5. Concinentes super ore cithera, sicut David excogitarunt sibi instrumenta cantici.

The word פרט, *pereth*, means to divide; so some explain it, and derive it from the clusters which remain after the vintage, because there are not then thick grapes, but a cluster here and there, and a great distance between: hence they think that the participle הפורטים, *epurethim*, is to be taken here metaphorically as meaning to divide by marks, as music has its various notes; for except there be a distinct variety in singing, the sound would be confused, and would produce no pleasing effect. *Who sing* then *with the harp, and have invented for themselves, after the example of David, musical instruments.*

The Prophet still continues his discourse, and shows that these men lived sumptuously; as though they did not belong to the common class, they delighted themselves, against God's will, not only in the common mode of living, but even sought new pleasures, as if they were continually at marriage-feasts, or celebrating birth-days. As then they had no season for mourning, they pursued their own indulgences; and this is what the Prophet now reprehends. If then any one thinks that music is in these words condemned, he is much deceived, as it appears from the context. Indeed, the Prophet never dealt so rigidly with that people, but he ever kept to this point—that they were extremely torpid, nay, destitute of common sense, who perceived not that God showed himself angry with them, in order that they might flee immediately to the standard of repentance and humbly deprecate, with mourning, the wrath of God, as they ought to have done. It was therefore meet ever to set before them God's wrath, which ought to have humbled the Jews and the Israelites, inasmuch as they ever obstinately set up against God their own indifference.

In saying that *after the example of David they invented for themselves musical instruments*, he no doubt greatly aggravated

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their sin by this comparison: for it is not likely that they had abused this pretext, as hypocrites do, who are wont to boast of the examples of the saints, when they seek to disguise their own vices,—"What!" some will say, "Did not David use musical instruments?" Others will say, "Had not Solomon very splendid palaces?" And some will add, "Had not Abraham a company of servants in his house?" So every one lays hold on what may avail for an excuse: and thus the examples of the saints are absurdly referred to by many. But it seems not probable that this was done by those whom Amos now addresses: but, on the contrary, he appears sharply to reprove them for provoking God's wrath by self-indulgence, and for manifesting their perverseness, while David employed musical instruments in the exercises of religion, to raise up his mind to God. No doubt, David, when in a peaceful state, after having been delivered from all dangers, could also amuse himself: but he applied musical instruments to another purpose—to sound forth the praises of God in the temple, that thereby he and other godly persons might together elevate their thoughts to a religious devotion. While David then, even in a state of peace and prosperity, did not allow his mind to become sunk in vain self-indulgences, these men, when God appeared angry, when he spread terror by so many tokens of his vengeance, yet dared contumaciously to follow their own ways, so that they left off nothing of their usual pomp and of their accustomed pleasures.

We now see the design of the comparison which the Prophet makes: He aggravates, I have no doubt, their sin, because they regarded not the example of David, but transferred musical instruments to serve the purpose of gross and beastly indulgences, and thus they did when God was opposed to them, when he had begun to terrify them by his vengeance. Let us proceed—

6. That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

6. Qui bibunt in phialis vinum, et primitiis oleorum sese ungunt, et non condolescunt super contritionem Joseph.

7. Therefore now shall they go captive with the

7. Propterea nunc transferentur (voluentur) in capite migrantium, et veniet luctus

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first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed.

extensorum (*est deductum ab eodem verbo* סרח; *diximus plura significare sed accipio pro* extendere; *et aliquid rursus dicendum erit in fine.*)

Amos now reproaches the chiefs of both kingdoms for drinking wine in bowls, that is, in vessels either elegantly formed or precious. Some think "silver" to be understood—"in vessels of silver:" but there is no need of regarding any thing as understood in the Prophet's words. The meaning is, that those men were sufficiently convicted of brutish stupidity, inasmuch as they did not forsake their indulgences, when God manifested his terrible vengeance. Since God then did thus what tended to humble them, their madness and blindness were conspicuous enough; for they indulged themselves, they drank wine according to their usual custom, when they ought to have betaken themselves, as we have said, to fasting, lamentation, and mourning, to sackcloth and ashes.

They drank *wine in bowls*, and further, they anointed themselves *with the chief ointments*. Christ, we know, was anointed at least twice, (Luke vii. 38; Matth. xxvi. 7;) and this practice was not blamed in David, nor in king Hezekiah, nor in others. Since then anointing was not in itself sinful, we see that the Prophet must have something particular in view. He meant to show, that when God manifested tokens of his wrath, nothing then remained for those who were conscious of having done evil, but humbly to abstain, like guilty persons, from all indulgences, that they might, by fasting and mourning, excite the mercy of God: as the Israelites had not done this, the Prophet expostulated with them. There is no need of seeking any other interpretation of this place.

For he immediately subjoins, that they *grieved not for the bruising of Joseph*. These words are to be read in connection with the former, and ought to be applied to the whole discourse. The Prophet then does not specifically blame the Jews and Israelites, because they drank wine in bowls, because they anointed themselves with the best and most precious ointment, because they reposed on ivory beds, because they extended themselves on their couches, because they ate the

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best meat; but because they securely indulged in such delights, and grieved not for the distress of their brethren, for God had miserably afflicted the whole kingdom before their eyes. How much had four tribes already suffered? and how much the whole land and those who lived in the country? Ought God to have spared any longer these chiefs? It is indeed certain, that those who were still free from these calamities were especially culpable. Since then they did not consider the wrath of God, which was evident enough before their eyes, it was a proof of stupidity wholly insane, and showed them who still indulged themselves to have been utterly besides themselves.

We now then understand the full meaning of the Prophet; and hence he says, *They shall emigrate at the head of the emigrants*, that is, "When there shall be an emigration, they shall be the first in order of time. I have hitherto indulgently spared you; but as I see that you have abused my forbearance, ye shall certainly be the forerunners of others; for ye shall go first into captivity. And my rigour shall begin with you, because I see that I have hitherto lost all my labour in attempting kindly and paternally to call you to repentance. *Ye shall* now then *migrate at the head of the emigrants.*"

And come shall the mourning of those who extend themselves, סרוחים, *saruchim*;[1] that is, "Ye indeed lie down, (as he had said before,) ye extend yourselves on your couches; but

[1] The words are וסר מרזח סרוחים, *usar merezach saruchim*,—an instance of striking alliteration. But Calvin's rendering, though amounting in its general import to the same thing, is certainly not the correct one. סר never means to come, but the reverse, to depart. To decline, to turn aside or away, or to depart, is its common signification. Then מרזח is properly shouting, either for grief or for joy; here evidently for the latter, and it may be rendered here mirth; so the clause may be thus translated—

And depart shall the mirth of the recumbents,
or, of those who stretch themselves.

Dr Henderson's version is the following:—

And the shouting company of those that recline shall depart.

The translation of Symmachus is, "Taken away shall be the company of the voluptuous, (ἑταιρεία τρυφητων.") The idea of "banquet" for the word here used, is what the Rabbins have given to it.—*Ed.*

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mourning shall come to you. Ye think that you can escape punishment, when ye repose quietly on your beds; but though your chambers be closed, though ye move not a finger, yet mourning shall come to you." We now see the connection between the words, mourning and resting in idleness and indulgence. The word שָׂרַח, *sarech*, means indeed properly to recumb; and hence some render the passage, "Mourning shall rest on you:" but the more received meaning is, *Mourning shall come on you while recumbing.* Though then they stretched out themselves on their beds, that they might pleasantly and softly recumb and rest themselves, yet mourning would come to them, that is, would enter into their chambers.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou showest thyself at this day to be justly offended with us, and our own consciences reprove us, inasmuch as dreadful tokens appear, by which we may learn how much and in how many ways we have provoked thy wrath,—O grant, that we may be really touched with the consciousness of our evils, and being afflicted in our hearts, may be so humbled, that without any outward affliction, we may wholly submit ourselves to be reproved by thee, and at the same time flee to that mercy which is laid up for us, and which thou daily offerest to us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Sixty-second.

8. The Lord hath sworn by himself, saith the Lord, the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein.

8. Juravit Dominus Jehova per animam suam, dicit Jehova, Deus exercituum, Detestor ego excellentiam Jacob, palatia ejus odio habeo, et tradam urbem et plenitudinem ejus.

God here declares that he would not desist, because he had hitherto loaded his people with many benefits: for he had now changed his purpose, so that he would no longer continue his favours. And this was designedly added by the Prophet; for hypocrites, we know, grow hardened, when they consider what dignity had been conferred on them; for they think

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their possessions to be firm and perpetual: hence they become haughty towards God. Since then hypocrites act thus foolishly, the Prophet justly says, that it would avail them nothing, that they had hitherto excelled in many endowments, for God no longer regarded their excellency.

The word גָּאוֹן, *gaun*, means in Hebrew pride and also excellency; but it is to be taken here in a good sense, as it is in many other places. In Isaiah ii., it cannot be taken otherwise than for glory, for it is applied to God. So also in Psalm xlvii., 'The glory of Jacob, whom I loved; he had fixed the inheritance of God.' The gifts of God ever deserve praise: hence the Prophet in this place inveighs not against pride; but, on the contrary, he shows that the Israelites were deceived; for they set up their excellency and nobility in opposition to God, as though they were to be thus exempt from all punishment. God then says that he had now rejected this excellency, which yet was his gift; but as the Israelites had abused his benefits, they were therefore to be esteemed of no account. The meaning then is,—that there is no acceptance of persons before God, that the dignity which had been conferred on the people of Israel was now of no moment; for it was a mere mask: they were unworthy of adoption, they were unworthy of the priesthood and kingdom. It was then the same as if the Prophet had said, "I will judge you as the common people and heathens; for your dignity, of which ye are stripped, is now of no account with me." They had indeed long before departed from God; they were therefore wholly unworthy of being owned by God as his inheritance.

I detest then *the excellency of Jacob*, and *his palaces;* that is, all the wealth with which they have been hitherto adorned. But the Prophet does not take either palaces or excellency in a bad sense; on the contrary, he shows that God's blessings are no safeguards to the wicked, so as to avoid the judgment which they deserve.

He afterwards adds, *I will deliver up the city and its fulness;* that is, "Though ye are now full of wealth, I will empty you of all your abundance." Hence, *I will deliver up the city together with its fulness*, that is, its opulence.

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But that this threatening might not be slighted, the Prophet confirms it by interposing an oath. Hence he says, that God had sworn. And as we know that God's name is precious to him, it is certain that it was not in vain adduced here, but on account of the hardness and contumacy of those who were wont to set at nought all the prophecies, and were wont in particular to regard as nothing all threatenings. This was the reason why the Prophet wished thus to ratify what he had said: it was, that hypocrites might understand that they could not escape the vengeance which he had denounced. The form of swearing, as it is, may seem apparently improper; but God in this place puts on the character of man, as he does often in other places. He swears by his soul, that is, by his life, as though he were one of mankind. But we ought to accustom ourselves to such forms, in which God familiarly accommodates himself to our capacities: for what Hilary philosophises about the soul, as though God the Father swore by his own wisdom, is frivolous: that good man certainly exposed his own doctrine to ridicule, while he was attempting to refute the Arians. "God the Father," he says, "swears by his own wisdom. Now he who is wont to swear by himself, could not swear by an inferior; but wisdom is the only begotten Son of God: hence it follows, that the Son is equal to the Father." These things at first sight seem plausible; but they are puerile trifles.

Let it then be observed, that God borrows from men this mode of swearing; as though he said, "If men be believed when swearing by their life, which yet is evanescent, of how much greater weight must that oath be, by which I pledge my own life?" Since God thus speaks, surely the whole world ought to tremble. We now apprehend the Prophet's design. Let us go on—

9. And it shall come to pass, if there remain ten men in one house, that they shall die.

9. Et erit, si restabunt decem homines in domo una, morientur.

The Prophet here amplifies the calamity, which was nigh the people; as though he had said, that God would not now take moderate vengeance on that reprobate people, for he did

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nothing by dealing moderately with them: there was therefore nigh at hand the heaviest vengeance, which would reduce the people to nothing. This is the import of the Prophet's words when he says, that *ten, if remaining in the same house, would die.* But in naming ten survivors, he intimates that a slaughter had preceded, which had taken away either the half or at least some part of the family, since ten remained. At the same time this number shows how severe and dreadful a judgment of God awaited that people, that *ten* would be taken away together. But it rarely happens, even when a direful pestilence prevails, that so numerous a family entirely perishes; when three out of four, or six or five out of eight, are taken away, it is a diminution which usually greatly terrifies men: but when ten are taken away together, and no one is left, it is an evidence of an awful vengeance.

We see then that the Prophet here denounces on the people utter ruin, for they could not be reformed by milder punishments: when God tried to recall them to a sane mind, he effected nothing. There was therefore no remedy for their desperate diseases: it was hence necessary entirely to take away those who were thus incurable. *Perish* then *shall the ten, who shall remain in one house.* It follows—

10. And a man's uncle shall take him up, and he that burneth him, to bring out the bones out of the house, and shall say unto him that *is* by the sides of the house, *Is there* yet *any* with thee? And he shall say, No. Then shall he say, Hold thy tongue: for we may not make mention of the name of the Lord.

10. Et tollet eum patruus ejus et avunculus ejus (*vel*, comburet eum) ad tollendum ossa è domo, et dicet ad eum qui erit in lateribus domus, An adhuc quispiam tecum? et dicet, Finis est (*ad verbum*, nihil;) et dicet, Tace; quia non licet recordari nominis Jehovæ.

In the beginning of the verse the Prophet expresses more clearly what he had just said,—that the pestilence would be so severe as to consume the whole family: for when he speaks of an uncle coming to bury the dead, he shows, that unless neighbours performed their duty, bodies would remain without the honour of a burial: but this never happened, except during extreme devastation; for though the pestilence destroyed many in the same city, there were yet always some

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who buried the dead. When therefore it was necessary for uncles to perform this office, it was evident how great the calamity would be. This the Prophet meant to express in these words, *His uncle shall take him away;* that is, his uncle shall take away each of the dead. But this office, being servile, as I have said, was wont to be committed to mercenaries; and when a father or an uncle was constrained to do this, it was a proof of great confusion.

An uncle then shall come and *take him away*, שׂרף, *shireph*, means to burn; it is written here with ם: but the change of ש into ם is well known. Hence, many render the words, *and shall burn him in order to take away his bones;* and this interpretation seems to suit the place. Then it is, *he will burn him, that he may carry his bones out of the house.* Dead bodies, as it is well known, were usually carried forth and burnt publicly. But as one man could not carry out a dead body, especially an old man, and Amos mentions an uncle, he says, that another plan would be necessary, that the uncle would burn his nephews at home, that he might have the bones only to carry out, as he could not carry forth their dead bodies. This seems to me to be the real meaning of the Prophet. For they who explain this of a maternal uncle, have no reason on their side: it was enough to mention one only when men were so few. If indeed a maternal uncle be added to the paternal one, a great number of men would seem to have been still remaining. But when mention is made only of one uncle, this circumstance agrees best with what I have stated. *An uncle* shall come, he shall *take him;* and then, *he will burn him, that he may carry forth his bones.* The bones could be easier carried out when the body was burnt, for the burden was not so heavy. We now then perceive the meaning of the words.

It follows, *And he will say to him who shall be at the sides of the house.* By the sides of the house, understand the next dwellings. He will then inquire, *Is there yet any one with thee?* that is, Is any one of thy neighbours alive? We cannot indeed explain the sides of the house as meaning the inner parts of the house, except one understands a reference to be made to strangers or lodgers, as though the Prophet

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said, "If there will be any lodger, he will seek retreat in some corner of the house." Then the uncle, when the whole house had become desolate, should he by chance meet a guest, says, "Is there any one with thee? And he shall say, There is an end," or a decay. Though there be some ambiguity in the words, we yet see what the Prophet meant, and what he had in view. He indeed confirms what he had previously declared in the person of God, which was,—that though ten remained alive in one house, yet all of them would die together, so that there would not be, no not one survivor; for the uncle, on inquiring respecting his nephews, whether any remained, would hear, that there was an end, that all had perished together. Now, the design of these words was to strike men with terror; for we know how great their stupidity is, as long as God spares them: but when they feel his hand, they then dread, though they are not moved by any threatenings. This, then, is the reason why the Prophet denounces here at large on the Israelites the dreadful judgment, which they would not dread, being, as we have seen, extremely secure and thoughtless.

It follows, *And he will say, Be silent; for it is not meet to mention the name of Jehovah.* This place is differently explained. Some think that their extreme wickedness is here noticed, that those who died, even in their last moments, would not mention the name of God. They thus then expound the words,—"Be silent," as though it were the expression of one indignant or of one who denied God. *Be silent,* then; for they remembered not the name of God, that is, those whom God would have humbled, repented not of their perverseness; even death itself could not bring them to the right way. Others give this exposition, *Be silent, for it is not meet to mention the name of God;* that is, "What can God's name do to us? for we abhor it as a bad and an unhappy omen; for God brings us no joy." The wicked dread the name of God, and wish it to be wholly obliterated.

But it seems to me that the Prophet's design is another, which interpreters have not sufficiently weighed. We first find that the hypocrites, whom he reproves, boasted of God's name; for they said in adversity that it was the day of the

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Lord, as though they expected a change for the better. The Prophet now says, that the time would come when this boasting would cease, for they would perceive that God was offended with them, and they would no longer falsely pretend his name, as they had been wont to do. There is then a contrast to be understood between what is here said, and what is said in a former verse. The Prophet had previously inveighed against their rash vaunting, when they pretended the name of God without any shame, "O! we are God's people, we are a holy nation, we are God's heritage." As, then, they were become thus arrogant, and yet had cast away God far from them, the Prophet now says, "These delusions shall then cease, by which ye now deceive yourselves; God will not suffer you wickedly to abuse his name, as ye have ever hitherto done; and ye still go on in this iniquity. Ye shall at that time," he says, "be silent respecting God's name; yea, it will be a dread to you."

We now apprehend the Prophet's object: he means that such would be the grievousness of this last calamity, that the Israelites would really find that God was an enemy incensed against them, so that they would cast aside the false glorying which filled them with pride; yea, that they would dread the very name of God, for they would know that nothing would be better for them than to be hid from his presence. As it is said of the reprobate, 'They will say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Bury us,' (Rev. vi. 16:) so also in this place, the Prophet says, that when hypocrites shall be struck and seriously frightened by God's judgments, their false vauntings will continue no longer; for they would find that to be near God is to be near destruction. *Be silent*, then, *for there is no reason for us to remember the name of Jehovah*. It follows—

11. For, behold, the Lord commandeth, and he will smite the great house with breaches, and the little house with clefts.

11. Quia ecce Jehova præcipiens et percutiet domum magnam mixtionibus (*vel*, contritionibus,) et domum parvam rimis (*vel*, rupturis, *aut*, scissionibus, *ut vertunt*, *vel*, scissuris.)

This verse is added only to confirm the former sentence. The Prophet indeed intimates, that the common people, as

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well as the chiefs, in vain trusted in their quiet state; for the Lord would destroy them all together, from the highest to the lowest. *Behold, Jehovah*, he says, *commands*, &c.; by using the word commands, he means, that God had many reasons why he should take away and destroy them all. But he goes farther than this, and intimates that their destruction was dependent on the sole will of God; as though he said, "Though the Lord may not send for ministers of vengeance, though he may not prepare great forces, yet his word only, whenever it shall go forth, will consume you all." We now then perceive what the Prophet means by the word "commands."

He afterwards adds, *He will smite the great house with confusions*, or, according to some, with breakings. רסס, *resas*, means properly to mingle. The Prophet therefore, I doubt not, refers here to those dreadful falls which commonly happen to great and splendid palaces. When a cottage is overturned, so great a ruin is not occasioned by its weight; nay, when its ruin begins to appear, fragments fall down one after another, so that the whole work falls without any violence. This, I say, is the case with small and common houses; but when there is a great building, its downfall is tremendous. I am therefore inclined to render the word "confusion," and the difference between small and great houses will then be more evident. *Great houses* then *shall be smitten with confusions*, (*mixtionibus*, with minglings,) but small houses shall be smitten with fissures or clefts. But yet, as I have already reminded you, the Prophet means that there would be a ruin, both to the principal men and to the common people, so that they would all perish, from the least to the greatest. We hence learn how great was the corruption of that people; for God punishes none but the wicked. It then follows that equity was everywhere subverted, and that all orders of men were become vicious and corrupt. It follows—

12. Shall horses run upon the rock? will *one* plough *there* with oxen? for ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock.

12. An current in rupe equi? an arabitur bobus (*est*, an arabit quispiam in bobus; *sed quia est verbum indefinitum, ideo verto impersonaliter*, an *ergo* aratio fiet bobus, *nempe* in rupe?) quia vertistis in fel judicium et fructum justitiæ in absynthium.

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This verse interpreters misrepresent; for some think that the Prophet, by these figurative expressions, means, that the people were wholly unprofitable as to any thing good; as some one says, "The slothful ox wishes for the saddle, the horse wishes to plough." They therefore suppose that this is the meaning of the words, "Ye are no more fitted to lead a good life than a horse is to run on a rock, or an ox to plough on a rock." Others think that the Prophet complains that the order of things was subverted, as though he said, "Ye have alike confounded all equity, government, and justice. In short, ye have subverted all right; as when one tries to ride swiftly over a high rock, or attempts to plough there, which is contrary to the nature of things: ye are therefore become monsters." Others, again, understand that the Prophet here complains that he had lost all his labour; for he had been singing, according to the common proverb, to the deaf. "What do I effect as to this iron generation? It is the same as if one tried to ride on the rock, to mount a rock on a swift horse; or as if one attempted to plough there; both which are impossible. So now, when I address stupid men, there is no fruit to my labour, and no advantage is gained."[1]

But let us see whether a fitter and a more suitable meaning can be elicited. We have already observed how secure the Israelites were; for they thought that God was, in a manner, bound to them, for he had pledged his faith to be a father to them. This adoption of God puffed up their hearts. The Prophet now reproves this presumptuous security; and, in a fitting manner, "Can a horse," he says, "run on a rock? and can an ox plough in a stony place? So there is not among you a free course to God's blessings. Ye ought indeed to have been the vineyard and the field of the Lord;

[1] This is the view taken by Matthew Henry, and seems not unsuitable. "The methods used for their reformation," he says, "have been all fruitless and ineffectual. *Shall horses run*, &c. No; for there will be no profit to countervail the pains. God had sent them his prophets to break up their fallow ground; but they found them as hard and inflexible as the rock, rough and rugged, and they could do no good with them, nor work upon them, and therefore they shall not attempt it any more." —*Ed.*

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justice and judgment ought to have reigned among you: but *ye have turned judgment into gall,* (ראש, *rash*, which is variously taken, but as to the sense it matters but little,) *ye have* then *turned judgment into gall, and righteousness into hemlock.* Since then ye are so perverse, a way for God's blessings is doubtless closed up. It cannot be that the Lord will act towards you in a manner like himself; for he must necessarily be refractory towards the refractory, as he is gentle towards the gentle." The Prophet seems to me to mean this; and if any one impartially considers the whole verse, he will easily find out the truth of what I have stated, namely, that the Prophet here reproves the supreme haughtiness of the Israelitic people, who thought God bound to them, though, at the same time, they, as it were, designedly provoked his wrath. "Ye think," he says, "that God will be always propitious to you; whence is this confidence? Is it because he has adopted you, because he made a covenant with your fathers? True he has done so; but what sort of covenant was it? What was engaged on your part? Was it not that ye would be perfect before him? But *ye have turned judgment into gall, and righteousness into hemlock.*[1] Since then ye are thus covenant-breakers, what can God now do? Do you wish him to proceed in the same course, and to bestow on you his blessings? Ye do not allow them to be bestowed; for ye are become like craggy rocks. How can God proceed in his course? how can he continue his benefits to you? He can certainly no more do so than a horse, however nimble he may be, can run swiftly on a rock, or an ox plough on a rock." We now understand what the Prophet means in this place. A confirmation of this view now follows, and from this connection the truth of what I have stated will become more evident.

13. Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?

13. Gaudetis in non re (*hoc est*, in nihilo,) dicitis, Annon in fortitudine nostra sustulimus nobis coronua?

This verse will seem better connected with the last, if we

[1] "*Ye have turned judgment into gall*, which is nauseous, *and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock*, which is noxious."—*M. Henry.*

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bear in mind the view to which I have referred: for the Prophet inveighs again against the careless contempt with which the Israelites were filled. *Ye rejoice*, he says, *in a thing of nought.* A thing of nought he calls those fallacies, by which they were wont to deceive, not only others, but also their own selves. For hypocrites not only falsely pretend the name of God, but also deceive themselves by self-flatteries, when they arrogate to themselves the name of Church, and the empty title of adoption and other things. We see this to be the case at this day with the Papists, who are puffed up with nothing; who not only with sacrilegious audacity twist the word of God against us, that they may appear to be the true Church, but also harden themselves: and though they are ill at ease with themselves, they yet lull themselves asleep by such deceptions as these, "God could not have suffered his Church to err; we have indeed succeeded the apostles: and though there are among us many vices and corruptions, yet God abides with us; and all who think not with us are schismatics; nay, though we may be supported by no reasons, yet their defection is not to be borne with. Let us then continue in our own state, for the Lord approves of our hierarchy." Thus the Papists not only deal in trifles to deceive the ignorant, but also harden themselves against God. Such was the blindness of the people of Israel. Hence the Prophet here reproves them, because they rejoiced in nothing; 'In no word,' he says, for so it is; but it means that they rejoiced in nothing; for they involved themselves in mere fallacies, and thus set up their empty delusions in opposition to God and his judgments.

Who say, Have we not in our own strength raised up for ourselves horns? Horns, we know, are taken in Hebrew for eminence, for strength, for elevation, or for any sort of defence. Hence the expression means the same as though they had said, "Are we not more than sufficiently fortified by our own strength?" It is however certain that they did not say this openly; but as the Prophet possessed the discernment of the Holy Spirit, he penetrated into their hearts and brought out what was hid within. We indeed know this to be the power of the word, as the apostle teaches in the fourth chapter to the Hebrews:

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for the word partakes of the nature of God himself, from whom it has proceeded; and as God is a searcher of hearts, so also the word penetrates to the marrow, to the inmost thoughts of men, and distinguishes between the feelings and the imaginations. This spiritual jurisdiction[1] ought therefore to be noticed, when the Prophets allege against the ungodly such gross blasphemies; for it is certain that they had not actually pronounced the words used by the Prophet; but yet their pride had no other meaning, than that they had *raised horns* to themselves by their *own strength*. They were indeed separated from the Lord; in the meantime they wished to abide safe through their own power. What did they mean? They had become alienated from God, and yet they sought to be in a state of safety, and thought themselves to be beyond any danger. Whence came this privilege? For they certainly ought to have sheltered themselves under God's shadow, if they wished to be safe. But as they renounced God, and despised all his instructions, nay, as they were manifestly his enemies, whence was this safety to come, which they promised to themselves, except they sought to derive their strength from themselves?

We now perceive the Prophet's design: He reproves the Israelites for being content with a false and empty title and for heedlessly despising God, and for only pretending a form of religion instead of its reality; it was this so gross a vice that he condemned in them: and he shows at the same time, that they put on horns, by which they assailed God; for while they were separated from him, they promised to themselves a secure and happy state. It at length follows—

14. But, behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the Lord, the God of hosts; and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hemath unto the river of the wilderness.

14. Certè, ecce tollo contra vos, domus Israel, dicit Jehova, Deus exercituum, gentem; et coarctabunt vos ab introitu Hemath usque ad torrentem campestrem.

At last follows a denunciation, and this is the close of the

[1] *Jurisdictio*, which means sometimes the authority to determine the import of the law; but it means here the power to interpret the thoughts of the heart.—*Ed.*

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chapter. God then after having seriously exposed the vices which prevailed among the people of Israel, again declares that vengeance of which he had shortly before reminded them; but with this difference only—that God now points out the kind of punishment which he would inflict on the Israelites. He had said before, 'Behold God commands;' and then he had spoken of calamity, but expressed not whence that calamity would come: but he now points it out in a special manner, *Behold*, he says, *I am raising up against you, O house of Israel, a nation*, who will *straiten you from the entrance into Hemath to the river, &c.* The Prophet no doubt speaks here of the Assyrians, and expresses in strong terms how dreadful the war with the Assyrians would be, which was now nigh at hand; for though large was their land and country, (and being large and spacious it had many outlets,) yet the Prophet shows that there would be everywhere straits, when the Lord would raise up on high that nation. *I am* then *stirring up a nation against you.*

He again calls the Lord, the God of hosts, for the same reason as before,—that they might understand that all the Assyrians were at God's disposal, and that they would stir up war whenever he gave them a signal. *The Lord* then *will raise up a nation, who will straiten you.* In what place? He speaks not here of strait places, but of a spacious country, which, as it has been stated, had many outlets. But after the Lord had armed against them the Assyrians, all the most spacious places were made strait to them, "Ye shall be everywhere confined, so that there will be open no escape from death."

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we are extremely deaf to those so many holy warnings by which thou continuest to recall us to thyself, and since we ever harden ourselves against those threatenings, by which thou terrifiest us, that thou mayest break or at least correct our hardness,—O grant, that we may, though late, yet in time, before final vengeance comes, attend to thy word and submit ourselves to thee, and in a teachable spirit undertake thy yoke, that thou mightest receive us into favour, and vouchsafe to us thy paternal kindness, and being at length

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reconciled to us, thou mightest grant us thy blessings, which thou hast promised to all thy children, who are the members of thy only begotten Son our Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER VII.

Lecture Sixty-third.

1. Thus hath the Lord God showed[1] unto me; and, behold, he formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth: and, lo, *it was* the latter growth after the king's mowings.

1. Sic ostendit mihi Dominus, et ecce formans locustas principio ascensionis herbæ (*hoc est*, quum incipit herba ascendere: לקש, *propriè significat secundam herbam, quam vocamus*, Regain) et ecce herba post sectiones (*vel*, tonsuras, *ut alii vertunt*) Regis.

2. And it came to pass, *that* when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord God, forgive, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? because he *is* small.

2. Et factum est dum perficeret ad comendendum (*hoc est*, quum jam ferè in totum absumpsisset herbam terræ,) tunc dixi, Adonai Jehova, parce, obsecro: quis stabit (*vel*, quis restituet) Jacob, quia parvus est?

3. The Lord repented for this: It shall not be, saith the Lord.

3. Pœnituit Jehovam super hoc; Non erit, dixit Jehova.

Amos shows in this chapter that God had already often deferred the punishment, which he had yet determined to inflict on the people; and thus he reminds the Israelites of their perverseness, inasmuch as they had abused the forbearance of God, and repented not after a long lapse of time: for God had suspended his judgments for this end—that they might willingly return to the right way, as he commonly allures men by his kindness, provided they be teachable. Since then this forbearance of God had been without fruit, Amos reproves the Israelites, though he had also another object in view: for ungodly men, we know, when God spares them and does not immediately inflict the punishments they deserve, laugh at them, and harden themselves for the future, so that they fear nothing; and when the Lord threatens, and does not instantly execute his vengeance, they then especially think that all threatenings are mere bugbears; and therefore

[1] The verb is הראני, "made" or caused "me to see;" and so to render it would have been better; and it is the same verb in the succeeding clauses. —*Ed.*

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they harden their minds in security, and think that they can with impunity trifle with God. Inasmuch then as this obstinacy prevailed among the Israelites, the Prophet here shows in various ways, that in vain they gloried, and thus securely despised the judgment of God; for though the Lord for a time had spared them, yet the final vengeance was not far distant. This is the sum of the whole: but each expression must be considered in its order.

A vision, he says, had been *shown* to him by the Lord; and the vision was, that God himself had *formed locusts*. Yet some think יְצִיר, *iutsar*, to be a noun, and render it, creation; others, a swarm or a troop. But these are forced expositions. The Lord then, I doubt not, formed locusts in the Prophet's presence, which devoured all the grass. He therefore says, *when the grass began to grow*, that is, *after the cuttings of the king*. Here also expounders vary: some think that the shearings of the king are referred to, when the king had sheared his sheep. Others regard it as the mowing of hay; and they say, that the best grass was then cut for the use of the king, that he might feed his horses and his cattle. But these conjectures have nothing well-founded in them. I therefore doubt not, but the Prophet here calls that a royal cutting, when by a public order they began to cut their meadows. It is indeed credible that there was then some rule: as with us, no one begins the vintage at his own will, but a certain regular time is observed; so those cuttings, which were publicly done, were called royal; as the king's highway is called that which is public. But yet the Prophet, I think, refers under this figurative expression to the previous calamities, by which the people had been already reduced as to their number.

But we must apply this prophecy or vision to its proper time. I doubt not, and I think that I can gather this from certain considerations, that the Prophet here compares the time which had preceded the reign of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, with the prosperous time which followed. For when Jeroboam the Second began to reign, the kingdom was laid waste, partly by hostile incursions, and partly by drought and heat, by inclement weather, or by pestilence. Since

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then the condition of the people, as sacred history relates, was most miserable, hence the Prophet says, that locusts had been shown to him, which devoured all the grass and standing corn: for he not only says, that locusts were formed, but also that they devoured the grass, so that nothing remained, *When they had finished*, he says, *to eat the grass of the earth, then I said, Lord Jehovah, &c.* Thus then the Prophet shows that sure tokens of God's wrath had then already appeared, and that the people had in part been already afflicted, but yet that God had afterwards given them time for repentance.

Now by locusts I understand a moderate kind of punishment. We have seen elsewhere (Joel i.) that the country had been then nearly consumed by the locusts and the cankerworms, and the like pests. But in this place the Prophet metaphorically designates hostile invasions, which had not immediately laid waste the whole country, but in some measure desolated it. This was indeed manifest to all, but few viewed it as the judgment of God, as also the Lord complains, that the perverse regard not the hand of the smiter, (Isa. x.) Though then the Israelites saw their land consumed, they did not think that God was displeased with them; for ungodly men do not willingly examine themselves nor raise their eyes to heaven, when the Lord chastises them: for they would grow, as it were, stupid in their calamities rather than set before themselves the judgment of God, that they may be seriously led to repentance: this they naturally shun almost all. Hence the Prophet says, that this was especially shown to him. The calamity then was known to all, and evident before the eyes of the people; but the Prophet alone, by a vision, understood that God in this manner punished the sins of the people: at the same time, the special object of the vision was,—to make the Israelites to know that the hand of God was withheld, as it were, in the middle of its work. They had seen the enemies coming, they had felt many evils; but they thought that the enemies retreated either through good fortune or some other means. They did not consider that God had spared them, which was the main thing. It was therefore shown to the Prophet in

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a vision, that God spared his people, though he had resolved to destroy the whole land.

And the Prophet expressly declares, that God had been pacified through his intercession and prayer: hence appears very clearly what I have already referred to, that is, that the Prophet condemns the unbelieving for having perversely trifled with God; for they regarded the threatenings which they had heard from the mouth of Amos and of others as jests. Whence was this? Because God had spared them. The Prophet shows how this took place; "The Lord," he says, "had at first resolved to destroy you, but yet he waits for you, and therefore suspends his extreme vengeance, that by his kindness he may allure you to himself; and this has been done through my prayers: for though ye think me to be adverse to you, as I am constrained daily to threaten you, and as a heavenly herald to denounce war on you; I yet feel compassion for you, and wish you to be saved. There is, therefore, no reason for you to think that I am influenced by hatred or by cruelty, when I address you with so much severity: this I do necessarily on account of my office; but I am still concerned and solicitous for your safety; and of this the Lord is a witness, and the vision I now declare to you." We now see that God's servants had so ruled and moderated their feelings, that pity did not prevent them from being severe whenever their calling so required; and also, that this severity did not obliterate from their minds the feelings of compassion. Amos, as we have already seen, severely inveighed against the people, sharply reproved their vices, and daily summoned irreclaimable men to the tribunal of God: as he was so vehemently indignant on account of their vices, and as he so sharply threatened them, he might have appeared to have forgotten all compassion; but this place shows that he had not yet divested himself of pity, though he faithfully discharged his office, and was not diverted from his purpose, when he saw that he had to do with wicked and obstinate men. He was therefore severe, because God so commanded him; it was what his calling required; but at the same time he pitied the people.

Let then all teachers in the Church learn to put on these

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two feelings—to be vehemently indignant whenever they see the worship of God profaned, to burn with zeal for God, and to show that severity which appeared in all the Prophets, whenever due order decays,—and at the same time to sympathise with miserable men, whom they see rushing headlong into destruction, and to bewail their madness, and to interpose with God as much as is in them; in such a way, however, that their compassion render them not slothful or indifferent, so as to be indulgent to the sins of men. Indeed, the temper of mind which I have mentioned ought to be possessed, so that they may go forth as suppliants before God, and implore pardon for miserable and wretched men: but when they come to the people, in their new character, that they may be severe and rigid, let them remember by whom they are sent and with what commands, let them know that they are the ministers of God, who is the judge of the world, and ought not therefore to spare the people: this then is to be attended to by us.

Now as to the word *repent*, as applied to God, let us know, as it has been elsewhere stated, that God changes not his purpose so as to retract what he has once determined. He indeed knew what he would do before he showed the vision to his Prophet Amos: but he accommodates himself to the measure of men's understanding, when he mentions such changes. It was then the eternal purpose of God, to threaten the people, to show tokens of his displeasure, and yet to suspend for a time his vengeance, that their perverseness might be the more inexcusable. But in the meantime, as this was without advantage, he sets forth another thing—that he was already armed to execute his vengeance. God then does not relate what he had decreed, but what the Israelites deserved, and what punishment or reward was due to them. When, therefore, God begins to inflict punishment on sinners, it is as though he intended to execute fully his vengeance; he however forms a purpose in himself, but that is hid from us. As soon then as he lifts up his finger, we ought to regard it as owing to his mercy, that we are not instantly reduced to nothing; when it so happens, it is as though he changed his purpose, or as though he withheld his hand. This then

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ought to be borne in mind, when the Prophet says, that God created locusts to devour all the grass, but that he suppliantly entreated God to put an end to this calamity. He then adds, that it repented God, not that there was any change of mind in God, but because God suddenly and beyond hope suspended the vengeance which was near at hand. *It shall not* then *be.*

With regard to the clause, *Be propitious, I pray; how will Jacob rise up,* or who will raise up Jacob? it appears that the Prophet saw no other remedy, except the Lord, according to his infinite goodness, forgave the people, and hence he prays for pardon. In the meantime, he shows that he prayed for the Church, "Lord," he says, "thy hand does not now pursue strangers, but an elect people, thy peculiar possession:" for by the name, *Jacob,* the Prophet extols the covenant which God made with Abraham and the Patriarchs; as though he said, "O God, wilt thou be inexorable towards the people whom thou hast chosen and adopted, of whom thou art the Father? Remember that they are neither Babylonians, nor Egyptians, nor Assyrians, but a royal priesthood, and thy holy and peculiar people." And there is nothing that inclines God more to mercy than the recollection of his gratuitous covenant, as we have elsewhere seen.

He then says, that Jacob was *small.* He does not allege the worthiness of Jacob, or adduce any proof of excellency, but says that he was small; as though he said, "O Lord, thou drawest forth now thy power against miserable creatures, who are already enfeebled enough:" for he calls him *small,* because he had been worn out by many calamities: and hence I said, that reference is here made to that miserable time, of which Scripture records, when it declares that the free as well as the captive were reduced to extreme distress, before Jeroboam the second began to reign. Then indeed God restored his people; but short was that favour; for immediately after the death of king Jeroboam, a sedition arose, which proved ruinous to the whole kingdom: his son Zachariah, as it is well known, was slain by Shallum, (2 Kings xv.)

How then *will Jacob rise up?* Some take the verb יָקוּם, *ikum,*[1] in a transitive sense, "Who will raise him up?" but

[1] One MS. has יְקִים, which is, to cause to rise, or to raise up. This

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others think it to be a neuter verb, "How will Jacob rise up?" that is, by what means will Jacob rise up? as מִי, *mi*, may be taken to mean, how, or by what means: How then will Jacob rise up? But this difference has little to do with the main point. It is then enough to say, that the Prophet here speaks of the weakness of the people, that on this account God might be more ready to forgive them. It now follows—

4. Thus hath the Lord God showed unto me: and, behold, the Lord God called to contend by fire, and it devoured the great deep, and did eat up a part.

5. Then said I, O Lord God, cease, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he *is* small.

6. The Lord repented for this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord God.

4. Sic ostendit mihi Dominus Jehova: et ecce vocans ad disceptandum in igne Dominus Jehova, et consumpsit (*aut*, voravit) abyssum magnam (et consumpta fuit possessio) (*alii* חלק *vertunt* partem agri; *sed malo accipere pro* tota possessione.)

5. Et dixi, Adonai Jehova, cessa, obsecro; quis (*hoc est*, quomodo) consurget Jacob? (*vel*, quis attollet, *ut prius dictum est*;) quia parvus est.

6. Pœnituit Jehova super hoc; Etiam hoc non erit, dicit Dominus Jehova.

The Prophet shows that God had not once only spared the people, but that when he was again prepared for vengeance, he still willingly deferred it, that, if possible, the people might willingly recover themselves: but as all were unhealable, this forbearance of God produced no fruit. Now as to the words of the Prophet, we see that a heavier punishment is designated by the similitude of fire, than by what he said before when he spoke of locusts. We stated that by locusts is to be understood ordinarily a moderate punishment, one not so dreadful at first sight. For though the want and famine introduced by locusts, when they consume all kinds of fruit, are most grievous evils; yet fire sometimes strikes people with much greater dread. Hence the Prophet shows by mentioning fire, that God had become very indignant, having seen that the people had hardened themselves, and could not be reformed by common and usual remedies. The Lord's usual mode of proceeding, as he declares everywhere in Scripture, is this:

agrees with the Septuagint—ἀναστήσει, and comports with the rest of the sentence; for מִי is 'who,' and not 'how,' or 'by what means.'—*Ed.*

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At first he tries to find whether men are capable of being healed, and applies not the most grievous punishment, but such as may be endured; but when he perceives in sinners hardness and obstinacy, he doubles and trebles the punishment, yea, as he says by Moses, he increases his judgments sevenfold, (Deut. xxviii.) Such then was the manner which Amos now records; for God at first created the locusts, and then he kindled a fire, which consumed the great deep, and devoured their possession.

The point, denoting a participial form in the word here used, shows that they are mistaken who render יוצר, *iutsar*, creation, of which we have spoken before; for the point here corresponds with that in יוצר, *iutsar*.[1] In both places the Lord shows himself to be the author of punishment, which is wont to be ascribed to chance; for men imagine that evils proceed from something else rather than from God. Hence it was necessary for this to be distinctly expressed, as the Prophet does also, when he says that locusts had been created by God, and that fire had been kindled by him.

God then *called to contend by fire*. It was not without a design that the Prophet uses the verb רוב, *rub*, which yet expositors have not duly weighed. For he indirectly condemns the hardness of the people, inasmuch as the Lord had already not only chastised the vices of the people, but had also contended with men depraved and obstinate: as when no justice can be obtained, a litigation becomes necessary; so the Prophet says here, that God was coming prepared with fire, to contend with the stubbornness of the people. *The great deep*, he says, was consumed by this fire. Hence what I have already said becomes more evident,—that a more dreadful punishment is here described than in the first vision. The locusts devoured the grass only, but the fire penetrates into the utmost deep; it consumes and destroys not only the surface of the earth, but burns up the very roots, yea, it descends to the centre and consumes the whole earth. They who render חלק, *chelak*, a part, do not sufficiently attend to

[1] The Masoretic point, called *Holem*, is referred to, which, being put above the ו after the first radical letter, or in absence of the ו, denotes a participle.—*Ed.*

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the design of the Prophet, for he concludes that the surface of the earth had been laid waste, because the very gulfs had not escaped the burning. And when the fire reaches to the very bowels of the earth, how could their possession stand, which was also exposed to the heat of the sun? We see how the earth is burnt up by heat, when the sun is scorching at Midsummer. We now perceive the Prophet's design.

He adds, that God was again pacified. We must ever bear in mind the object he had in view; for ungodly men thought the Prophets to be liars, whenever God did not immediately execute the vengeance he had denounced: but Amos here reminds them, that when God defers punishment, he does not in vain threaten, but waits for men to repent; and that if they still go on in abusing his patience, they will have at last to feel how dreadful is the vengeance which awaits all those who thus pervert the goodness of God, who hear not God inviting them so kindly to himself. This is the meaning. It follows—

7. Thus he showed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall, *made* by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand.

8. And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more:

9. And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.

7. Sic ostendit mihi: et ecce Dominus stabat (stans) super murum perpendiculi, et in manu ejus perpendiculum.

8. Et dixit Jehova mihi, Quid tu vides Amos? Et dixi, Perpendiculum. Tunc dixit Dominus, Ecce ego pono perpendiculum in medio populi mei Israel: non adjiciam amplius ut transeam ipsum:

9. Et destruentur excelsa Isaac, et evertentur (excidentur) sanctuaria Israel; et surgam super domum Jeroboam in gladio.

This vision opens more clearly to us what the Prophet meant before, and what was the object of his doctrine: his intention was to show the people that what they had gained by their obstinacy was only to render God implacable, and to cause him not to spare them any longer, as he had hitherto done. The meaning is,—"God has hitherto borne with you according to his own goodness, promise not to yourselves that he will ever deal in the same manner with you; for your

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contumacy and waywardness has provoked him. As he sees you to be beyond measure obstinate, he must now necessarily execute on you final vengeance. There is therefore now no forgiveness provided for you; but as ye are incurable, so the Lord on his part will remain unchangeable in the rigour of his judgment, and will by no means turn to mercy."

Interpreters explain this vision in various ways, and refinedly philosophise on the word, *plumbline;* and yet frigid are almost all their refinements. Were I disposed plausibly to handle this passage, I would say, that the plumbline is the law of God; for it prescribed to his people a regular order of things, which might serve as a plumbline; inasmuch as all things were directed according to the best rule. I might speak thus; but I am not disposed to refine in this manner; for I doubt not but that God meant only that this would be the last measuring; for he would punish his people without any remission and without any delay. We now apprehend the Prophet's meaning: but all this will become more evident from the words of the passage.

Thus he showed to me; and, behold, the Lord stood on a wall of a plumbline. The wall of a plumbline he calls that which had been formed by rule, as though he had said that it was a wall by a plumbline. God then stood on a plumbline-wall, and *a plumbline,* he says, *was in his hand.* False then is what some interpreters say, that a plumbline was cast away by God, because he would no more perform the office of a mason in ruling his people. This is frivolous; for the Prophet testifies here expressly that a plumbline was in the hand of God.

But that which follows has an important meaning: God asks his Prophet, *What seest thou, Amos?* It is probable that the Prophet was astonished at a thing so mysterious. When locusts were formed, and when there was a contention by fire, he might have easily gathered what God meant; for these visions were by no means ambiguous: but when God stood on a wall with a plumbline, this was somewhat more hard to be understood; and the probability is, that the Prophet was made to feel much astonishment, that the people might be more attentive to hear his vision, as we commonly apply our thoughts more to hidden things; for we coldly

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attend to what we think to be easily understood; but mysteriousness, or something difficult to be known, sharpens our minds and attention. I do not then doubt but that God made the Prophet for a time to feel amazed, with the view of increasing the attention of the people. *What* then *dost thou see, Amos? A plumbline*, he says: but, at the same time, he knew not what was the meaning of this plumbline, or what was its design. Then God answers, *Behold, I set a plumbline in the midst of my people;* that is, "I fix this to be the last rule, or the final measure, and *I will not add any more to pass by them.*" As God had twice leaped over the bounds of his judgment by sparing them, he says, now that the last end was come, "I will proceed no farther," he says, "in forgiving them: as when a wall is formed to the plumbline, that no part may, in the least, exceed another, but that there may be regularity throughout, so also this shall be the last order; this measuring shall be true and just. I will pass by them no more." This, I have no doubt, is the real meaning of the Prophet. We now also perceive the design of the other two visions to have been, to prevent the Israelites from deceiving themselves by false self-flatteries, because God was kind and favourable to them. He shows that he dealt so with them, not because they were just; for God had already begun to execute his judgments on them; and the punishments with which they had been visited were strong evidences of their crimes: for God is not, without reason, angry with men, especially with his chosen people. Since then they had been already smitten once and again, the Prophet proves that they were worthy of heavier punishments; and that punishments had been mild and moderated, was to be ascribed, he says, to the indulgence of God, because he was willing to forgive his people; but that the time had now come when he would no longer pardon them; for he saw that he had to do with irreclaimable obstinacy. This is the meaning.

It now follows, *And destroyed shall be the high places of Isaac, and overthrown shall be the sanctuaries* (some render palaces) *of Israel; and I will rise up against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.* The Prophet here distinctly declares, that the people in vain trusted in their temples and super-

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stitions, for by these they kindled the more against themselves the wrath of God. He would not indeed have expressly threatened the high places and the temples, unless the Israelites had provoked in this way, as I have already said, the vengeance of God against themselves, inasmuch as they had corrupted the true and lawful worship of God.

Destroyed then *shall be the high places of Isaac.* It may be asked, Why does he mention here the name of Isaac, which is rarely done by the Prophets? And there is also a change of one letter; for the word Isaac is commonly written with צ, *tsade*, but here it is written with שׁ, *shin;* but it is well known that שׁ, *shin*, and צ, *tsade*, are interchangeably used. It is, however, beyond dispute, that the Prophet speaks here of the holy man Isaac; and the reason seems to be plainly this,—because the Israelites absurdly pretended to imitate their father in their superstitions; for temples, we know, had been erected where Isaac had worshipped God, and also their father Abraham and Jacob. Inasmuch then as the Israelites boasted of the examples of holy fathers, the Prophet here condemns this vain and false boasting. They who understand by the word Isaac, that the Prophet threatens the Idumeans as well as the Israelites, have no reason for their opinion; but the reason which I have already mentioned is quite sufficient.

We indeed know, that the Israelites had ever in their mouths the examples of the fathers, like the woman of Samaria, who said to Christ, 'Our fathers worshipped in this mountain,' (John iv. 22.) So also the Israelites were wont formerly to allege, that the holy patriarchs worshipped God in those places,—that God appeared in Bethel to holy Jacob, and also that in other places altars were built. Being armed with the examples of the fathers, they thought them to be their shield. The case is the same with the Papists in our day; when they hear of anything as having been done by the fathers, they instantly lay hold on it; but these are vain excuses. Like them were also the Israelites; hence the Prophet says, "Behold, ye gain nothing by this fallacious pretence; for *destroyed shall be the high places of Isaac*, even those which are now covered by an honourable name: and at

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the same time the *temples* or palaces of *Israel shall be overthrown.*

And I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword. We learn from this last clause that things were then, as we have stated elsewhere, in a prosperous state in the kingdom of Israel, though God had in various ways wasted it before Jeroboam: but they had been ever obstinate. He afterwards restored them to a better condition; for the state of the people greatly improved under Jeroboam: he recovered many cities, enlarged the borders of his kingdom, and then the people, in their affluence, began to grow wanton against God. As then the Prophet thus saw that they abused God's goodness, he denounces destruction on Jeroboam; hence he says, *Against the house of Jeroboam I will rise up with the sword;* that is, "I will begin to execute my judgment on the offspring of the king himself; though I may spare him, yet his posterity shall not escape my hand."

PRAYER.

Almighty God, since thou so suspendest thy hand in chastising us, that except we be wholly blind and stupid, we must acknowledge that we are spared in order that we may willingly return to thee, and that being allured by the gentleness of thy forbearance, we may submit ourselves to thee in willing obedience,— O grant, that we may not harden our hearts, nor be slow, nor slothful, nor even backward to repent, when thou deferrest extreme punishment, but strive to anticipate thy final vengeance, and so submit ourselves to thee, that we may be pardoned while it is time, and so hasten to offer our hearts whole and sincere to thee, and so repent, while urged by extreme danger, that there may not remain any hidden hypocrisy in our hearts, but that we may in such a way search every faculty of our soul, that thou mayest become to us a real and faithful witness of that integrity which thou requirest of all who return to thee to obtain pardon through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Sixty-fourth.

10. Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired

10. Et misit Amazias sacerdos Bethel ad Jeroboam regem Israel, dicendo, Conspiravit contra te Amos

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against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words.

11. For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land.

12. Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there:

13. But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it *is* the king's chapel, and it *is* the king's court.

in medio domus Israel: non poterit terra sustinere omnes ejus sermones.

11. Quia sic dicit Amos, Gladio morietur Jeroboam; et Israel migrando migrabit è terra sua.

12. Et dixit Amazias ad Amos, Videns, vade, fuge (tibi, *est supervacuum*) in terram Jehudah; et comede illic panem et illic propheta:

13. Et in Bethel ne adjicias amplius prophetare, quia sanctuarium regis est, et domus regni est.

The Prophet here relates the device by which Satan attempted to depress his mind, that he might not go on in the discharge of his prophetic office. He says, that Amaziah had sent to the king to induce him to adopt some severe measure; for he pretended that as Amos scattered words full of sedition, and made turbulent speeches, the affairs of the king could not be carried on, except the king in due time prevented him: and besides, the same Amaziah said, that nothing could be better for the Prophet than to flee into the land of Judah, as he might live in safety there; for he had incurred great danger in having dared to prophesy against the king. It hence appears that Amaziah was a perfidious and cunning man, but not so bloody as to attempt openly anything serious against the Prophet's life; unless perhaps he thought that this could not be done, and gave this advice, not so much through his kindness, as that the thing was impracticable: and this second supposition is probable from the words of the passage.

For, in the first place, the Prophet says, that Amaziah had *sent to the king*. He then tried whether he could excite the king's mind to persecute Amos. It may be that his design did succeed: hence he undertook what in the second place is related, that is, he called the Prophet to himself, and tried to frighten him, and drive him by fear from the land of Israel, that he might no longer be troublesome to them. But we must, in the first place, notice the motive by which this Amaziah was influenced, when he endeavoured so much, by any means possible, to banish the Prophet from the kingdom

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of Israel. It is certainly not credible that he was influenced by what he pretended to the king, that there was a danger of sedition; but it was a pretence cunningly made. Amaziah then had a care for his own advantage, as we see to be the case in our day with cardinals and mitred bishops, who frequent the courts of princes, and do not honestly profess what their designs are; for they see that their tyranny cannot stand unless the gospel be abolished; they see that our doctrine threatens to become a cold and even an ice to their kitchens; and then they see that they can be of no account in the world, except they crush us. And what do they at the same time pretend? that our doctrine cannot be received without producing a change in the whole world, without ruin to the whole civil order, without depriving kings of their power and dignity. It is then by these malicious artifices that they gain favour to themselves. Such was the device of Amaziah, and such was his manœuvre in opposing the Prophet Amos.

Behold, he says to the king, *he has conspired against thee*. קשר, *kosher*, is to bind, but, by a metaphor, it signifies to conspire: *Conspired* then *has Amos against thee*. But who speaks? Amaziah; and the Prophet omits not the title of Amaziah; for he says that he was *the priest of Bethel*. He might have only said, "Amaziah sent to king Jeroboam:" but by mentioning that he was a priest, the Prophet shows that Amaziah did not strive for the peace of the public, as he pretended; and that this was therefore a fallacious pretence, for he fought for his own Helen, that is, he fought for his own kitchen, in short, for his living: for he would have been deprived, with disgrace, of his priesthood, and then reduced to penury and want, except he had driven away the Prophet Amos. Since then he saw that such and so great an evil was nigh him, except Amos was banished, he had this object in view, and pretended another thing, and sent to the king and said, *Amos has conspired;* and he enhances the crime, *In the midst of the house of Israel*. "This is not done," he says, "in a corner, or in some obscure place; but his doctrine is heard on all the public roads, whole cities are filled with it; in short, it burns like fire in the very bosom, in the very midst of the kingdom; and thou wilt soon find thy own house

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to be all in a flame, unless thou appliest a remedy, yea, except thou extinguishest it." We hence see how Amaziah acted, and the reason why he so earnestly persuaded the king to give liberty no longer to the Prophet Amos.

With regard to what follows,—that the *land could no longer bear his words*, the sentence admits of two probable meanings. The first is, that he said, that the people, being offended with his turbulent doctrine, did now of themselves hate and detest the Prophet Amos, as a seditious man. Kings are in our day stirred on in like manner,—"Why do you delay? Your subjects desire nothing so much as to extinguish this evil, and all of them will eagerly assist you: ye are in the meantime idle, and your people complain of your tardiness. They think the princes in power are unworthy of their station, since they thus suffer the ancient rites and ordinances of holy Mother Church to fall into decay." So they speak: and we may imagine the words of Amaziah to have been in the same strain,—that he stimulated the king by this artifice—that the people were prepared to do their part. The other meaning is this, *The land cannot bear his words;* that is, "If he goes on here with full liberty to raise tumults, as he has begun, the whole kingdom will be on the verge of ruin, for many will follow him; and when an open sedition will arise, it cannot be checked without great difficulty. We must therefore make every haste, lest Amos should get the upper hand; for there is already the greatest danger." As the Pharisees held a consultation, and said, 'Lest the Romans come and take away our place and nation,' (John xi. 48,) so also Amaziah might have excited the king by causing him to fear, that the land, the country, or its inhabitants, had been disturbed by the words of Amos, and that therefore it was time to put a stop to him. Such was the message of Amaziah to the king.

Now our Prophet is wholly silent as to the answer of the king: it is therefore probable, either that the king was not much excited,—or that he dared not openly to take away the life of Amos; for he had probably obtained some authority among the people; and though he was hated, yet his name as a Prophet and his office were had in reverence,—or that

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the matter was by agreement arranged between the two enemies of sound doctrine, as flatterers often gratify kings by putting themselves in their place, and by bearing all the ill will. However this might have been, it is certainly a probable conjecture, that the king did not interfere, because he was so persuaded by the priest Amaziah, or because he feared the people, or because religion restrained him, as even the ungodly are sometimes wont to contain themselves within the bounds of moderation; not that they are touched by real fear towards God, or that they desire to embrace his true worship: they wish God to be thrust down from heaven, they wish all knowledge of religion to be obliterated; but yet they dare not pour forth their fury. Such fear then might have seized the mind of Jeroboam, that he did not tyrannically rage against the Prophet Amos. But if we regard the tendency of the words of Amaziah, he certainly wished the Prophet Amos to be immediately visited with capital punishment; for conspiracy is a crime worthy of death; and then, fear might have impelled the king to put the holy Prophet immediately to death. Amaziah therefore expected more than what he attained: and then appeared his vulpine wiliness, for he sent for the Prophet and advised him to withdraw to the land of Judah. Hence, as I said at the beginning, it is very probable that Jeroboam was not excited according to the expectation of the ungodly priest of Bethel, who at first was a cruel wild beast; but when he could not proceed openly to destroy Amos, he put on a new character; he became a fox, because he could do nothing as a raging lion. Hence follows his second attempt, *And Amaziah said to Amos*, &c.

I have passed over one clause in the last verse: *Amos says, By the sword shall Jeroboam die, and Israel, by migrating, shall migrate from their own land.* These, in short, are two heads of accusation. Some interpreters think that Amaziah had slanderously perverted the words of the Prophet Amos; for he did not denounce death on king Jeroboam, but only on his people and posterity: but I do not insist on this. It might then be, that Amaziah did not designedly pervert the words of Amos, but only wished to excite the ill will of the king.

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Die then shall Jeroboam or his posterity with the sword, and Israel also, by migrating, shall migrate from their own land. We hence learn, that Amaziah was not impelled only by the last address of the Prophet Amos, but that he then discovered the hatred which he had long harboured. Amaziah therefore had been, no doubt, on his watch, and had heard what Amos daily taught, and when he thought the matter ripe, he sent to the king. Having tried this way, and found that it did not answer, he came to his second attempt, which we are now to consider.

Amaziah then said to Amos,—that is, after his first proceeding disappointed him; for he did not obtain from king Jeroboam what he expected,—then Amaziah said to Amos, *Seer, go, flee to the land of Judah!* By saying *Go*, he intimates that he was at liberty to depart, as though he said, "Why wouldest thou wilfully perish among us?" At the same time, the two clauses ought to be joined together. He says first, *Go*, and then, *flee*. When he says *Go*, he reminds him, as I have already said, that if he wished, he might go away, as no one prevented his departure: "Go, then, for the way is open to you." But when he says *Flee*, he means that he could not long remain safe there: "Except thou providest for thy life, it is all over with you: flee then quickly away from us, else thou art lost." We hence see how cunningly Amaziah assailed God's Prophet. He proposed to him an easy way of saving his life; at the same time he urged him with the fear of danger, and declared that he could not remain safe, except he immediately fled. These then were the two reasons which he used as mighty engines to depress the heart of the holy Prophet.

He afterwards subjoins, *And eat there thy bread*. This is the third argument. He might be allowed to live in his own country, and be supplied there with sustenance; for Amos was, as we have said, one of the shepherds of Tekoa. He must then have arisen from the tribe of Judah, and he had his habitation and his relations in that kingdom. Besides, Azariah was not an ungodly king: though not one of the most perfect, he yet respected and honoured the servants of God. Hence, by saying, *Eat there thy bread*, Amaziah means

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that there was a safe residence for the Prophets in the kingdom of Judah, and that they were there esteemed both by the king and by the people, and that they might live there. This is the third argument.

Now follows the fourth: "If thou dost object to me, and say that thou art a Prophet, and that it is neither lawful nor right in thee to be silent, *be a prophet there.* Thou knowest that prophets are attended to in the kingdom of Judah; thou mayest then perform thine office there, and live at liberty, and without fear." We hence see four of the reasons by which Amaziah attempted to persuade the Prophet Amos to leave the people of Israel, and to go to his own kindred.

But there follows a fifth reason: *But in Bethel prophesy no more; for the sanctuary of the king it is, and his court.* Here Amaziah annoys the Prophet by another pretence, or he tries, at least, to shake his courage, by intimating that it was unbecoming to raise commotions in the kingdom of Israel, and also that, by so doing, he offended God, because Jeroboam was a divinely appointed king, and endued with the chief authority. Since then the king could, by his own right, institute new modes of worship, Amaziah here argues that it is not in the power of any one who pleased to pull down those rites which had been universally received, and then confirmed by a royal edict, but that they ought to be received without any dispute. We then perceive now the import of the whole.

But it must be noticed in this place, that we must be watchful, not only against the open violence and cruelty of enemies, but also against their intrigues; for as Satan is a murderer, and has been so from the beginning, so he is also the father of lies. Whosoever then wishes strenuously and constantly to spend his labours for the Church and for God, must prepare himself for a contest with both: he must resist all fears and all intrigues. We see some not so fearful, though a hundred deaths were denounced upon them, who are yet not sufficiently cautious when enemies craftily insinuate themselves. I have not, therefore, said without reason, that God's servants have need of being fortified against both; that they ought to be prepared against the

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fear of death, and remain intrepid, though they must die, and that they ought to lay down their necks, if needs be, while performing their office, and to seal their doctrine with their own blood;—and that, on the other hand, they ought to be prudent; for oftentimes the enemies of the truth assail them by flatteries; and the experience of our own times sufficiently proves this. More danger, I know, has ever been from this quarter; that is, when enemies attempt to terrify by such objections as these, "What is your purpose? See, the whole world must necessarily at length be consumed by calamities. What else do you seek, but that religion should everywhere flourish, that sound learning should be valued, that peace should prevail everywhere? But we see that the fiercest war is at hand: if once it should arise, all places would be full of calamities, savage barbarity, and cruelty, would follow, and religion would perish: all this ye will effect by your pertinacity." These things have often been said to us. When therefore we read this passage, we ought to notice the arts by which Satan has been trying to undermine the efforts of the godly, and the constancy of God's servants.

As to the first argument, there is no need much of dwelling longer upon it; for every one can of himself perceive the design of all this crafty proceeding. He says first, *Seer, go.* Amaziah addresses Amos in a respectful way: he does not reproachfully call him, either an exile, or a seditious man, or one unlearned, or a cowherd, or a person unworthy of his office. He does not use any such language, but calls him a seer; he concedes to him the honourable title of a Prophet; for by the word חוֹזֶה, *chese*, he means this, "I confess thee to be God's Prophet: I grant that thou art a Prophet, but not our Prophet; *Seer*, then, *go.*" We hence see that he left to him untouched the honour of being a Prophet, that he might more easily creep into his favour, lest by raising a dispute at first, there should be between them a violent contest: he therefore avoided all occasions of contention.

It might however have been asked him, Why he was blind? For the office of a priest was to watch; and the Prophets were in such a manner joined to the priests, that

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when God substituted Prophets in their place, he indirectly charged them with idleness and indifference. For why were the priests appointed? That they might be the messengers of the Lord of hosts, as it is said by Malachi, 'The people shall seek from the mouth of the priest my law, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts,' (Mal. ii. 7.) Amaziah then ought especially to have performed himself the Prophet's office, for he was a priest. He was indeed, I allow, a spurious priest; but having claimed so honourable a name, he ought to have discharged its duties: this he did not, and conceded that title to the Prophet. So now our mitred bishops are very liberal in conceding titles, "O, Mr Teacher, ye can indeed see and understand many things: but yet ye ought, at the same time, to consult the peace of the community." They call those teachers who have been invested with no public office, but are yet under the necessity of undertaking the duties of others, for they see that these mitred bishops are dumb dogs. In a like manner, also, did Amaziah act towards the Prophet Amos; for he was content with his own splendour and great pomp, and with his own riches; he lived sumptuously, and enjoyed a rich booty, and superstitions well warmed his kitchen. He therefore easily surrendered to others the title of a Prophet: in the meantime, he prided himself on his priesthood.

But as to the second argument, there was a sharper sting in it, *Flee*, he says. By flight he intimates, that it was necessary for the Prophet to depart, though he wished to remain. So this second reason was borrowed from necessity; for the Prophet could no longer be borne with, if he proceeded in the free discharge of his office. *Flee* then *to the land of Judah, and there eat bread.*

With regard to this third reason, he seems to imply, that the Prophet Amos would be too pertinacious and too much wedded to his own opinion, if he preferred not to live safely and quietly in his own country, rather than to endanger his life in another land. Go then. Where would he send him? To his own country. Why? "Thou art here a foreigner, and seest thyself to be hated; why then dost thou not rather return to thine own country, where thy religion prevails?"

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Amaziah did not indeed address the Prophet Amos, as many profane men do at this day, who are less like Epicureans than they are to swine and filthy dogs; for they object and say, "Thou mayest return to thine own country; why hast thou come to us?" They send us away to our own country, when they know that there is there no safe place for us. But at that time pure religion flourished in the land of Judah: hence Amaziah says, "Why dost thou not live with thy own countrymen? for there are many there who will supply thee with sustenance; the king himself will be thy friend, and the whole people will also help thee."

As to the fourth argument, we see what a crafty sophist is the devil, *Be a Prophet there.* Who speaks? Amaziah, who perfectly hated the temple at Jerusalem, who would have gladly with his own hands set it on fire, who would have gladly put to death all the pious priests; and yet he allows to holy Amos a free liberty to prophesy, and he allows this, because he could not immediately in an open manner stop the holy Prophet in his course: he therefore sends him away to a distance. We hence see that Satan, by various arts and means, tempts the servants of God, and has wonderful turnings and windings, and sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light, as it is said by Paul, (2 Cor. xi. 14:) and in this place we have a remarkable instance of this. Is not Amaziah an angel of light, when he advises the Prophet Amos to serve God freely in his own country, and to prophesy there, and to open his mouth in defence of God's worship and of pure religion? provided he did not do all this in the land of Israel. We have then in this chapter, as I have said, a remarkable instance of the wiliness of Satan.

Now as to the fifth argument, it is especially needful to dwell on it. *In Bethel,* he says, *add no more to prophesy, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is the house of the kingdom.* Here only Amaziah shows what he wished, even to retain possession of his priesthood; which he could not have done without banishing the Prophet: for he could not contend with him in arguments. He consulted then his own advantage by getting rid of the Prophet. Whatever various characters therefore he assumed in the last verse, and not-

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withstanding the many coverings by which he concealed himself, the ape now, as they say, appears as the ape. Amaziah then shows what he had in view, even that he might remain quiet in the possession of his own tyrannical power, and that Amos should no more molest him, and pull up by the roots the prevailing superstitions: for Amaziah was a priest, and Amos could not perform his office without crying out daily against the temple of Bethel; for it was a brothel, inasmuch as God was there robbed of his own honour; and we also know that superstitions are everywhere compared to fornications. Amaziah then now betrays his wicked intention, *In Bethel prophesy not;* he would retain his quiet state, and wished not the word of God to be heard there. His desire was, as we have already said, to extinguish everywhere the light of heavenly truth; but as he could not do this, he wished to continue at least in his own station without any disputes, as we see the case to be in our time with the Pope and his mitred bishops. They became quite mad when they heard that many cities and some princes made commotions in Germany, and departed from their submission to them; but as they could not subdue them by force, they said, "Let us leave to themselves these barbarians; why, more evil than good has hitherto proceeded from them; it is a barren and dry country: provided we have Spain, France, and Italy, secured to us, we have enough; for we have probably lost more than what we have gained by Germany. Let them then have their liberty, or rather licentiousness; they will again some time return, and come under our authority: let us not in the meantime be over-anxious about them. But let not this contagion penetrate into France, for one of our arms has been already cut off; nor let Spain nor Italy be touched by it; for this would be to aim at our life." Such also was this Amaziah, as it evidently appears,—Prophesy not then in Bethel.

And he spoke cunningly when he said, *Add no more to prophesy;* for it was the same as though he pardoned him. "See, though thou hast hitherto been offending the king and the common feeling of the people, I will not yet treat you with strict justice; I will forgive thee all, let what thou hast

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done amiss remain buried, provided thou *addest no more* in future." We hence see that there is emphasis in the expression, when he says, Proceed not, or, add not; as though he had said, that he would not inquire into the past, nor would accuse Amos of having been seditious: provided he abstained for the future, Amaziah was satisfied, as we may gather from his words, *Add* then *no more to prophesy.*

And why? Because *it is the king's sanctuary.* This was one thing. Amaziah wished here to prove by the king's authority that the received worship at Bethel was legitimate. How so? "The king has established it; it is not then lawful for any one to say a word to the contrary; the king could do this by his own right; for his majesty is sacred." We see the object in view. And how many are there at this day under the Papacy, who accumulate on kings all the authority and power they can, in order that no dispute may be made about religion; but power is to be vested in one king to determine according to his own will whatever he pleases, and this is to remain fixed without any dispute. They who at first extolled Henry, King of England, were certainly inconsiderate men; they gave him the supreme power in all things: and this always vexed me grievously; for they were guilty of blasphemy (*erant blasphemi*) when they called him the chief Head of the Church under Christ. This was certainly too much: but it ought however to remain buried, as they sinned through inconsiderate zeal. But when that imposter, who afterwards became the chancellor of that Proserpina,[1] who, at this day, surpasses all devils in that kingdom—when he was at Ratisbon, he contended not by using any reasons, (I speak of the last chancellor, who was the Bishop of Winchester,[2]) and as I have just said, he cared not much about the testimonies of Scripture, but said that it was in the power of the king to abrogate statutes and to institute new rites,—that as to fasting, the king could forbid or command the people to eat flesh on this or that day, that it was lawful for the king to prohibit priests from marrying, that it was lawful for the king to interdict to the people the

[1] The fabled queen of hell.—*Ed.*
[2] This was probably Gardiner.—*Ed.*

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use of the cup in the Supper, that it was lawful for the king to appoint this or that thing in his own kingdom. How so? Because supreme power is vested in the king. The same was the gloss of this Amaziah of whom the Prophet now speaks: It is the sanctuary of the king.

But he adds afterwards a second thing, *It is the house of the kingdom.*[1] These words of Amaziah ought to be well considered. He says first, *It is the king's sanctuary*, and then, *It is the house of the kingdom.* Hence he ascribes to the king a twofold office,—that it was in his power to change religion in any way he pleased,—and then, that Amos disturbed the peace of the community, and thus did wrong to the king by derogating from his authority. With regard to the first clause, it is indeed certain, that kings, when they rightly discharge their duty, become patrons of religion and supporters (*nutricios*—nursers) of the Church, as Isaiah calls them, (Isa. xlix. 23.) What then is chiefly required of kings is this—to use the sword, with which they are invested, to render free (*asserendum*) the worship of God. But still they are inconsiderate men, who give them too much power in spiritual things, (*qui faciunt illos nimis spirituales*—who make them too spiritual:) and this evil is everywhere dominant in Germany; and in these regions it prevails too much. And we now find what fruit is produced by this root, which is this,—that princes, and those who are in power, think themselves so spiritual, that there is no longer any church discipline; and this sacrilege greatly prevails among us; for they limit not their office by fixed and legitimate boundaries, but think that they cannot rule, except they abolish every authority in the Church, and become chief judges as well in doctrine as in all spiritual government. The devil then suggested at that time this sentiment to Amaziah,—that the king appointed the temple: hence, since it was *the king's sanctuary*, it was not lawful for a private man, it was not even lawful for any one, to deny that religion to be of authority, which had been once approved of, and pleased the king. And princes listen to a

[1] So it is literally בית ממלכה. Newcome renders it, "The temple of the kingdom." Henderson, "The royal residence." Grotius, *Sedes imperii*, "The seat of the empire."—*Ed.*

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sweet song, when imposters lead them astray; and they desire nothing more than that all things without any difference or distinction should be referred to themselves. They then gladly interfere, and at first show some zeal, but mere ambition impels them, as they so carefully appropriate every thing to themselves. Moderation ought then to be observed; for this evil has ever been dominant in princes—to wish to change religion according to their will and fancy, and at the same time for their own advantage; for they regard what is of advantage to themselves, as they are not for the most part guided by the Spirit of God, but impelled by their own ambition. Since then we see that Satan by these hidden arts formerly contended against God's prophets, we ought to bewail and lament our own courses. But whosoever desires to conduct himself as it behoves him, let him watch against this evil.

It now follows, *And it is the house of the kingdom.* Amaziah contends here no more for the royal prerogative, with regard to spiritual power. "Be it, that the king ought not to have appointed new worship, thou hast yet offended against the peace of the community." The greater part of the princes[1] at this day seek nothing so much as that they might enjoy their own quietness. They ever declare that they would be courageous enough even to death in the defence of their first confession; but yet what are the teachers they seek for themselves? Even those who avoid the cross, and who, to gratify the Papists, or to render them at least somewhat milder, change according to their wishes: for we see at this day that the minds of princes are inflamed by these fanners, not to spare the sacramentarians, nor allow to be called into question what is asserted, not less grossly than foolishly and falsely, respecting the presence of Christ's body, or his body being included under the bread. "When we show that we contend against them, and that we are separated from them, nay, that we will be their mortal enemies, we in this agree with the Papists; there will then be some access to them, at least their great fury will cease, the Papists will become gentle:

[1] He refers evidently to the Protestant princes.—*Ed.*

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they will no more be so incensed against us; we shall hereafter obtain some middle course." So things are at this day carried on in the world; and nothing is more useful than to compare the state of our time with this example of the Prophet, so that we may go on in our work, employing the same weapons with which he contended, and not be moved by these diabolical arts; for we have no enemies more hostile and open than these domestic traitors.

It is then *the house of the kingdom.* He now speaks of the secular arm, as they say, and shows that though religion were to perish a hundred times, yet care was to be taken, lest Amos should pull up by the roots the kingdom of Jeroboam, and the customs of the people. It now follows—

14. Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I *was* no Prophet, neither *was* I a Prophet's son; but I was a herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit:

15. And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.

14. Et respondit Amos, et dixit ad Amaziam, Non sum Propheta ego, neque ego sum filius Prophetæ; quia pecuarius sum ego et colligens (*vel*, quærens) sicomoros:

15. Et sustulit me Jehova à tergo ovium (quum sequerer oves meas; de post oves, *ad verbum*,) et dixit mihi Jehova, Vade, propheta ad populum meum Israel.

The Prophet Amos first pleads for himself, that he was not at liberty to obey the counsel of Amaziah, because he could not renounce a calling to which he was appointed. As then he had been sent by God, he proves that he was bound by necessity to prophesy in the land of Israel. In the first place, he indeed modestly says, that he was not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet: why did he say this? To render himself contemptible? By no means, though the words apparently have this tendency; but it was to gain for himself more authority; for his extraordinary call gave him greater weight than if he had been brought up from his childhood in the schools of the prophets. He then shows that he became a prophet by a miraculous interposition, and that the office was not committed to him by human authority, and in the usual way; but that he had been led to it as it were by

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force, so that he could not cast aside the office of teaching, without openly shaking off the yoke laid upon him by God.

This account then which Amos gives of himself ought to be noticed, *I was not a Prophet, nor the son of a Prophet.* Had he said simply that he was not a Prophet, he might have been accused of presumption: how so? No one takes to himself this honour in the Church of God; a call is necessary; were an angel to descend from heaven, he ought not to subvert public order; (Gal. i. 8,) for all things, as Paul reminds us, ought to be done decently and in lawful order in the Church; for the God of peace presides over us. Had Amos then positively denied that he was a Prophet, he might on this account have been thrust away from his office of teaching, for he wanted a call. But he means that he was not a Prophet who had been from his childhood instructed in God's law, to be an interpreter of Scripture: and for the same reason he says that he was not the son of a Prophet; for there were then, we know, colleges for Prophets; and this is sufficiently evident from sacred history. As then these colleges were instituted for this end—that there might be always seminaries for the Church of God, so that it might not be destitute of good and faithful teachers, Amos says that he was not of that class. He indeed honestly confesses that he was an illiterate man: but by this, as I have already said, he gained to himself more authority, inasmuch as the Lord had seized on him as it were by force, and set him over the people to teach them: "See, thou shalt be my Prophet, and though thou hast not been taught from thy youth for this office, I will yet in an instant make thee a Prophet." It was a greater miracle, that Christ chose rude and ignorant men as his apostles, than if he had at first chosen Paul or men like him, who were skilful in the law. If then Christ had at the beginning selected such disciples, their authority would have appeared less: but as he had prepared by his Spirit those who were before unlearned, it appeared more evident that they were sent from above. And to this refers the expression the Prophet uses, when he says, *Jehovah took me away:* for it intimates that his call, as we have said, was extraordinary. The rest we shall defer till to-morrow.

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PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that inasmuch as thou permittest reins so loose to Satan, that he attempts, in all manner of ways, to subvert thy servants,—O grant, that they who have been sent and moved by thee, and at the same time furnished with the invincible strength of thy Spirit, may go on perseveringly to the last in the discharge of their office: and whether their adversaries assail them by crafts, or oppose them by open violence, may they not desist from their course, but devote themselves wholly to thee, with prudence as well as with courage, that they may thus persevere in continual obedience: and do thou also dissipate all the mists and all the crafts which Satan spreads to deceive the inexperienced, until at length the truth emerge, which is the conqueror of the devil and of the whole world, and until thy Son, the Sun of Righteousness, appear, that he may gather the whole world, that in thy rest we may enjoy the victory, which is to be daily obtained by us in our constant struggles with the enemies of the same, thine only Son. Amen.

Lecture Sixty-fifth.

16. Now therefore hear thou the word of the Lord: Thou sayest, Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not *thy word* against the house of Isaac.

17. Therefore thus saith the Lord: Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of this land.

16. Et nunc audi verbum Jehova tu, qui dicis, Ne prophetes super Israel, et ne stilles (*vel*, loquaris) super domum Isaac.

17. Propterea sic dicit Jehova, Uxor tua in urbe prostituetur, et filii tui et filiæ tuæ gladio cadent, et terra tua funiculo devidetur, et tu in terra polluta morieris: et Israel migrando migrabit è terra sua (*ad verbum est*, de super terram suam.)

Amos, having shown that he must obey God, who had committed to him the office of teaching, now turns his discourse to Amaziah, and points out what he would gain by his insolence in daring to forbid a Prophet, an ambassador of the God of heaven, to proclaim what he had in command. As, then, Amaziah had proceeded into such a degree of rashness or rather of madness, Amos now assails him and says, *Hear then now the word of Jehovah.* He sets here the word

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or the decree of God in opposition to the prohibition of Amaziah: for the ungodly priest had forbidden God's servant to proclaim his words any more in the land of Israel: "Who art thou? Thou indeed thus speakest; but God will also speak in his turn." He shows, at the same time, the difference between the speech of Amaziah and the word of God: the impostor had indeed attempted to terrify the holy man so as to make him to desist from his office, though the attempt was vain; but Amos shows that God's word would not be without effect: "Whether I hold my peace or speak," he seems to say, "this vengeance is suspended over thee." But he, at the same time, connects God's vengeance with his doctrine; for this was also necessary, that the ungodly priest might know that he gained nothing else, by attempting to do everything, than that he had doubly increased the vengeance of God.

There is, therefore, great emphasis in these words, *Now hear the word of Jehovah, thou who sayest, Prophesy not.* Amaziah was indeed worthy of being destroyed by God a hundred times, together with all his offspring: but Amos intimates that God's wrath was especially kindled by this madness,—that Amaziah dared to put a restraint on God, and to forbid his Spirit freely to reprove the sins of the whole people. Since, then, he proceeded so far, Amos shows that he would have justly to suffer the punishment due to his presumption, yea, to his furious and sacrilegious audacity, inasmuch as he set himself up against God, and sought to take from him his supreme authority, for nothing belongs more peculiarly to God than the office of judging the world; and this he does by his word and his Prophets. As, then, Amaziah had attempted to rob God of his own right and authority, the Prophet shows that vengeance had been thereby increased: *Thou* then, *who sayest, Prophesy not against Israel, and speak not, hear the word of Jehovah.*

Remarkable is this passage, and from it we learn that nothing is better for us, when God rebukes us, than to descend into our own consciences, and to submit to the sentence which proceeds from his mouth, and humbly to entreat pardon as soon as he condemns us: for if we be refractory, God

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will not cease to speak, though we a hundred times forbid him; he will therefore go on notwithstanding our unwillingness. Further, we may vomit forth many blasphemies; but what can our clamorous words do? The Lord will, at the same time, speak with effect; he will not scatter his threatenings in the air, but will really fulfil what proceeds from his mouth; and for this reason Paul compares heavenly truth to a sword, for vengeance is prepared for despisers. We ought therefore to take notice of this in the Prophet's words,—that when profane men attempt to repel every truth and all threatenings, they gain nothing by their perverseness; for the Lord will exercise his own right; and he will also join to his word, as they say, its execution. "Thou then who sayest, Prophesy not, hear the word of Jehovah; though thou mayest growl, yet God will not be hindered by these thy commands; but he will ever continue complete in his own authority." And he mentions *word*, as we have already said, to show that the truth, with which the ungodly contend, is connected with the power of God. God might indeed destroy all the unbelieving in silence, without uttering his voice; but he will have his word honoured, that the ungodly may know that they contend in vain, while they vomit forth their rage against his word, for they will at length find that in his word is included their condemnation.

Now, when he says, *Prophesy not against Israel, and speak not against the house of Isaac*, we may learn again from these words, that the word Isaac is used by the Prophet by way of concession; for the people of Israel were then wont to adduce the example of this holy patriarch. Thus superstitious men, neglecting the law of God, the common rule, ever turn aside to the examples of the saints; and they do this without any discrimination; nay, as their minds are perverted, when anything has been wrongfully done by the fathers, they instantly lay hold on it: and then, when there is anything peculiar, which God had approved in the fathers, but wished not to be drawn, as they commonly say, into a precedent, the superstitious think that they have the best reason in their favour, when they can set up such a shield against God. As, then, the Israelites had at that time the name of their father

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Isaac in their mouths, while they were foolishly worshipping God in Bethel and in other places, contrary to what the law prescribed, the Prophet Amos designedly repeats here again the name of Isaac, expressing it probably in imitation of what had been said by Amaziah.

Now follows a denunciation, *Therefore thus saith Jehovah.* This לכן, *lacan*, therefore, shows that Amaziah suffered punishment, not only because he had corrupted God's worship, because he had deceived the people by his impostures, and because he had made gain by the disguise of religion; but because he had insolently dared to oppose the authority of God, and to turn aside the Prophet from his office, both by hidden crafts and by open violence. Inasmuch then as he had attempted to do this, Amos now declares that punishment awaited him. We hence see that destruction is doubly increased, when we set up a hard and iron neck against God, who would have us to be pliant, and when he reproves us, requires from us at least this modesty—that we confess that we have sinned. But when we evade, or when we proceed still onward, this issue will at last follow—that God will execute double vengeance on account of our obstinacy. *Therefore* then *Jehovah saith:* and O! that this were deeply engraven on the hearts of men; there would not then be so much rebellion at this day prevailing in the world. But we see how daring men are; for as soon as the Lord severely reproves them, they murmur; and then, if they have any authority, they stretch every nerve to take away from God his own rights, and from his servants their liberty. At the same time, when we observe the ungodly to be so blind, that they perceive not the vengeance, such as the Prophet here denounces, to be nigh them, and dread it not, it behoves us duly to weigh what the Prophet here declares, and that is, that perverse men, as I have already said, do gain this only by their obstinacy—that they more and more inflame God's displeasure.

With respect to the kind of punishment he was to suffer, it is said, *Thy wife in the city shall be wanton:* it is so literally; but the Prophet speaks not here of voluntary wantonness. He then intimates that Amaziah could not escape punish-

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ment, but that his wife would be made a prostitute, when the enemies occupied the land of Israel. We indeed know that it was a common thing for conquerors to abuse women: and well would it be, were the practice abolished at this day. Besides, it was deemed lawful in that age for the conqueror to take to himself not only the daughter but also the wife of another. This then is the reason why the Prophet says, *Thy wife shall be a prostitute.* But he says, *in the city;* which was far more grievous, than if the wife of Amaziah had been led to a distance, and suffered that reproach in an unknown country: it would have less wounded the mind of Amaziah, if the enemies had taken away his wife, and this disgrace had continued unknown to him, it being done in a distant land. But when his wife was publicly and before the eyes of all constrained to submit to this baseness and turpitude, it was much more hard to be endured, and occasioned much greater grief. We hence see that the punishment was much increased by this circumstance, which the Prophet states when he says, *Thy wife shall in the city be a prostitute.*

Then it follows, *Thy sons and thy daughters shall by the sword fall.* It is a second punishment, when he declares, that the sons and also the daughters of the ungodly priest would be slain by the enemies. It was indeed probable, that some also of the common people had suffered the same evils; but God no doubt punished the wilfulness and madness of Amaziah for having dared to resist admonitions as well as threatenings.

But he also adds, *Thy land shall be divided by a line.* He means by this statement, that there should be none to succeed Amaziah; but that whatever land he possessed should become a prey to the enemies. *Thy land* then *shall be divided by a line.* It may at the same time be, that Amos speaks here generally of the land of Israel; and this seems to me probable. I indeed allow that neither by Amaziah nor by the other priests was the law of God kept; but we yet know that there was some affinity between the lawful priesthood, and the spurious priesthood which the first Jeroboam had introduced. Hence I conjecture that Amaziah had no possessions, it being lawful for priests to have only gardens and pastures for their

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cattle; but they cultivated no lands. I am therefore disposed to extend to the whole people what is said of the land of one man; and this opinion is confirmed by what immediately follows.

But thou shalt die in a polluted land. He called that the land of Amaziah in which he and the rest of the people dwelt; but he calls the land into which he, with all the rest, were to be driven, a polluted land. If any one objects and says, that this punishment did not apply to one man, the ready answer is this,—that God meant that an especial mark should be imprinted on his common judgment, that Amaziah might know, that he had as it were accelerated God's vengeance, which yet he intended to turn aside, when he sent away, as we have seen, the Prophet Amos into the land of Judah.

It follows at last, *Israel by migrating shall migrate from his own land.* We here see that the Prophet proclaimed no private threatening, either to Amaziah himself or to his wife or to his children, but extended his discourse to the whole people: the fact at the same time remains unchanged, that God intended to punish the perverseness of that ungodly man, while executing his vengeance on the whole people. Now follows—

CHAPTER VIII.

1. Thus hath the Lord God showed unto me: and behold a basket of summer-fruit.

2. And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer-fruit. Then said the Lord unto me, The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more.

1. Sic ostendit mihi Dominus Jehova; et ecce corbis fructus æstivi (*vel*, canistrum.)

2. Et dixit, Quid tu vides, Amos? Et dixit, Corbem (*vel*, canistrum) fructus æstivi: et dixit Jehova mihi, Venit finis super populum meum Israel; non adjiciam amplius transire in eo.

By these words or by this vision the Prophet confirms what we have already observed—that paternal chastisements would no longer be exercised towards the people of Israel. God indeed, as it is well known, had so treated that people, that he ever spared them even in their greatest calamities. It was with a suspended hand that God ever struck that people,

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until after many trials they at length seemed so refractory, as not to be benefited by such remedies. This subject then Amos now pursues: but a vision was shown to him, to confirm more fully God's judgment, or at least to produce a greater impression on the minds of the people.

God showed to him a *basket* full of summer-fruit. By summer-fruit, I doubt not, he means a ripe punishment, as though he said, that the vices of the people had ripened, that vengeance could no longer be deferred: for an exposition of the vision immediately follows, when he says, that *the end of the people had come*, &c.; and this we have already explained in the third vision. But there is a similarity in the Hebrew words, which cannot be expressed either in Greek or Latin. קַיִץ, *kits*, means a summer-fruit, and קֵץ, *kots*, signifies an end: one letter only is inserted in the word, summer-fruit, which God showed in a basket; and then he adds that קֵץ, *kots*, the end had come. But as to the main point, we see that there is nothing ambiguous. I will now return to the first thing.

Thus God showed to me. There is no need of repeating what I have already discussed. The Prophet here prefaces, that he adduced nothing without authority, but only faithfully related what had been commanded him from above. And this ought to be carefully observed; for God ever so employed his Prophets, that he yet reserved for himself entire the right of teaching, and never transferred his own office to men, that is, as to the authority. Then he says, *The Lord Jehovah showed to me, and, lo, a basket of summer-fruit.* We may understand cherries by summer-fruit, and those fruits which have no solid vigour to continue long; but this is too refined. I take the simple meaning, that punishment had now become ripe; for the people had not repented, though they had been so often warned; it was then as it were summer. He showed to me a basket of summer-fruit. But as to God asking his Prophet what he saw, we have already explained the reason why it was done: it behoved the Prophet to be at first filled with astonishment, that the people might be made more attentive; for when we hear of a conference between God and the Prophet, our minds are awakened; inasmuch as it must immediately occur to us, that there is something worthy

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of being remembered. God then rouses in this manner the minds of his people. So we see there is nothing superfluous in this repetition.

Now follows the exposition of the vision, *Jehovah said to me, Come has the end on my people Israel.* We perceive, then, the meaning of the Prophet to be,—that the people had hitherto been warned by moderate punishments; but that as they had become hardened, extreme vengeance was nigh at hand, when God would no longer perform the part of a father or of a physician, but would utterly destroy those whom he had long borne with. We indeed know that most grievous calamities had happened to the people of Israel, even before this time; but whenever God showed forbearance, he ever allured them to true penitence. Lest, then, they should promise such a treatment to themselves hereafter, and by self-flatteries protract time, as hypocrites are wont to do, the Prophet declares here expressly, that the end had come; as though he said, "Your iniquity is ripe: now then gather the fruit; for ye cannot proceed farther, no, not even for one day. Fruit will indeed come to you of itself." *The end* then *is come, and I will no more add to pass by them.* To pass by, as we have already explained, is to be referred to punishment. For why does God chastise his people, except that he is solicitous for their salvation? He says, then, that he would make an end, that he would not spend labour hereafter in correcting the people, for he saw that nothing availed. Hence, *I will not pass by them,* that is, I will execute my extreme vengeance: *Il n'y faudra plus retourner,* as we commonly say. It follows—

3. And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: *there shall be* many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast *them* forth with silence.

4. Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail.

3. Et ululabunt cantica templi die illo, dicit Dominus Jehova: multum cadaver (*hoc est,* multa cadavera) in omni loco prosternentur cum silentio.

4. Audite hoc qui absorbetis pauperem et exterminatis inopes terræ.

The Prophet touches the Israelites here, in an indirect way, for taking such delight in their superstitions, as to sing in their prosperity, as though God was favourable to them;

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for the unbelieving are wont to misconstrue both the hatred and the favour of God by the present appearance of things. When the Turks enjoy prosperity, they boast that God is on their side: we see also that the Papists draw the same conclusion. It is the disposition of men not to look so much on themselves as on external circumstances. When, therefore, God indulges them for a time, though they be more than usually wicked, they yet doubt not but that God is favourable to them. So the Sodomites, to the very time in which they were overwhelmed by sudden destruction, thought that they had peace with heaven, (Gen. xix.:) this also is the reason why Isaiah says, that the ungodly had made, as it were, a covenant with hell and death, (Isa. xxviii.;) and we know what Christ says of the time of Noah,—that they then heedlessly feasted and built sumptuous houses, (Matth. xxiv.) Such carnal security has prevailed almost in all ages. But a special vice is here noticed by the Prophet, namely, that the people of Israel sang songs in their temples, as though they meant designedly to mock God: for the voices of the Prophets resounded daily, and uttered grievous and terrible threatenings; but the people in the meantime sang in their temples. In the same way the Papists act in the present day; while they bellow and chant, they think that God is twice or three times pacified; and they also congratulate themselves in their temples, when they have everything prosperous. This abuse, then, is what the Prophet refers to when he says, *Howlings shall be the songs of the temple.* For melody he mentions howling, as though he said, "God will turn your songs to lamentations, though they be now full of joy."

He afterwards adds, *For many a carcase shall be cast down in every place:* but I prefer to render the word passively, "Cast down everywhere with silence shall be many carcases."[1]

[1] The literal rendering of the verse seems to be this—

> And they shall howl the songs of the temple:
> Many a dead body *shall be* in every place;—
> "Cast *it* away, be silent."

The expressions are abrupt, but very striking. What would be com-

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By these words he intimates that there would be such a slaughter as would prevent them from burying the dead bodies. We have said in another place that the right of burial is commonly observed even by enemies; for it is more than hostility to rage against the dead: and all who wish not to be deemed wholly barbarous either bury their dead enemies, or permit them to be buried; and there is a sort of an understanding on this point among enemies, and the right of burial has been usually observed in all ages, and held sacred among all nations. When therefore dead bodies are thrown down in silence, it is an evidence of a most grievous calamity. We hence see why the Prophet distinctly expresses here, that many a dead body would be cast down in every place in silence, that is, that there would be no burying of the dead. But as we see men, though a hundred times proved guilty, yet quarrelling with God, when he executes rather a grievous punishment, the Prophet now contends with the Israelites, and again repeats what we have before noticed,—that God did not deal cruelly with them, and that though he should consume and obliterate the whole people, it would yet be for just reasons, inasmuch as they had reached the very extremities of wickedness.

And he assails by name the princes of the people, *Hear this*, he says, *ye who tread upon* or swallow up *the poor*. The Prophets, as we have already stated, did not without reason direct their discourses to the chief men, though the common people were nearly as much involved in the same guilt. It is certain that the state of the people of Israel was then so corrupt, that all, from the highest to the lowest, were become degenerated, and none were free from blame. But as more guilt belongs always to leaders, this is the reason why the Prophets treated them with more sharpness and severity: for many of the common people go astray through thought-

monly said is mentioned, "Cast it away," &c. *Newcome* translates as follows—

> "*There shall be* many dead bodies in every place:
> *And men shall say*, Cast forth, be silent."

Very tame is this, compared with the original literally rendered. To introduce, *And men shall say*, lessens the force of the sentence.—*Ed.*

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lessness or ignorance, or are led on by others; but they who govern, pervert what is just and right, and then become the originators of all kinds of licentiousness. It is no wonder then that the Lord by his Prophets inveighed so sharply against them; and this is now the object of the Prophet in saying, *Hear this:* for there is an emphasis in the expression, when he bids them to hear; it was either because they did not sufficiently observe their sins, and were wholly deaf, or because they in vain contended with God; for hypocrites think that by evasion they can escape judgment. *Hear,* he says, *ye who devour the miserable, and destroy the poor of the land.* We see here some difference marked, and that the Prophet does not generally and indiscriminately summon the common people and the princes to God's tribunal; but turns his discourse to the princes only. It now follows—

5. Saying, When will the new-moon be gone, that we may sell corn? the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?

5. Dicendo, Quando transibit mensis, ut vendamus frumentum? et sabbathum, ut aperiamus (*hoc est,* depromamus) triticum, et attenuemus ephah? (*hoc est,* mensuram minuemus; *scimus enim ephah fuisse communem mensuram:* quando *ergo* minuemus mensuram,) et augemus שקל, siclum, et pervertamus stateras dolosas?

The Prophet goes on here with the same subject; for this could not apply to the whole people, but only to the plunderers who were able to oppress the miserable and the poor among the common people, and who had a great abundance of corn: the same we see at this day,—a few men in time of want have provisions hoarded up, so that they as it were put to death miserable men by reducing them to want. Since then the few rich held the whole people in a state of famine, the Prophet says here, "Do you think that God deals too rigidly or too cruelly with you, inasmuch as ye have hitherto been killing men with misery and want?" Were any one to object, and say, that the slaughter which the Prophet has already threatened was to be common to the whole people, and that therefore it is now improperly stated, that the wrongs done to the people were brought on them by a few men: to this I answer, that there were other

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vices among the people which required to be corrected, and this we have already seen, and shall see again in other parts; but it was necessary to make a beginning with the proud men, who, relying on their own dignity, thought themselves exempt and free from the common lot. Hence it was necessary to close their mouths: and further, the Prophet did not spare others in their turn. But we see to what extent of mad folly haughty men, and such as possess worldly riches and power, would run, were not the Lord to restrain and check them. This is the reason why the Prophet now especially addresses them.

Ye therefore say, *When will pass the month, that we may sell corn?* Some take חדש, *chedash*, month, for the new-moon; and it is sometimes so taken, and this interpretation is probable; for immediately follows the word, Sabbath. *When* then *will pass the month, and when will pass the Sabbath, that we may be able to sell our corn?* As it was not lawful to carry on business either on the Sabbath or on the new-moon, whenever they rested but one day, they thought that so much time was lost to them; for we see that the avaricious grow weary, as their cupidity ever excites them, for they are like an oven: and since they are thus hot, if an hour is lost, they think that a whole year has passed away; they calculate the very moments of time. "How is it," they say, "there is no merchant coming? I have now rested one day, and I have not gained a farthing." As then the avaricious are so extremely careful, it is probable that the Prophet here refers to this disease of the mind, as though he said, "You have no rest, no relaxation. God has commanded his people to rest on every new-moon; and his will also is, that you should abstain from every work on the seventh day: ye think this time as lost, for ye get no gain." But another exposition is equally probable, which is this,—that they expected corn to be every month dearer; as those robbers in our day gape for gain, who from every quarter heap together corn, and thus reduce us to want; they look forward, month after month, and think that some calamity may happen to increase the price of corn; frost or rain may come, some disaster may take place; when the spring passes away, there may come

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some hail or mildew; in short, they are, as it were, laying in wait for some evil. This meaning does not ill suit this place; at the same time they refer it to the intercalary month, which being an addition, prolongs time, so that the year becomes longer: and what follows respecting the Sabbath corresponds well with this view; as the word is to be taken in another sense than of the seventh day, for we know that on every seventh year there was no ploughing, no cultivation of the land, among the Jews; and the corn was then dearer, when there was no crop. Thus then there was a prey as it were provided for the avaricious and the extortioners.

When then *will pass the Sabbath, that we may open our storehouses?* They closed their storehouses, until the whole year, without cultivation or produce or harvest, had passed away; and then they opened their storehouses, or at least it was the time when they in a great measure opened them. Since then they so cruelly dealt with the people, the Prophet justly reproves them, and shows that God did not too rigidly treat them, but recompensed them with such a reward as they merited. Other matters we shall defer to the next Lecture.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty, that as thou ceasest not daily to warn us in time to repent and anticipate thy judgment,—O grant, that we may not be so deaf and slow, as to delay until our vices be ripened, lest no remedy should remain for us; but, on the contrary, that being tamed and subdued by thy threatenings, we may flee to thy mercy, and so consider thy judgments while at a distance, that we may not provoke thy wrath by our perverseness, but rather dispose thee to pardon by striving to be reconciled to thee in the name of Christ thy Son, and by doing this not only with the mouth and tongue, or by any other outward means, but also with a real feeling of heart and a life corresponding thereto, so that we may present ourselves in uprightness and sincerity, as thy children, that thou mayest also show thyself as a Father to us in the same Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

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Lecture Sixty-sixth.

In my last Lecture I was under the necessity of breaking off the subject: the sixth verse, with the two preceding ones, must be connected together. The Prophet says—

6. That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; *yea*, and sell the refuse of the wheat.

6. Ut emamus argento pauperes et inopem pro calceamentis, et quisquilias frumenti vendamus.

Here still he speaks of the avarice of the rich, who in time of scarcity held the poor subject to themselves and reduced them to slavery. He had spoken before of the Sabbaths, and he had spoken of deceitful balances; he now adds another kind of fraud,—that by selling the refuse of wheat, they bought for themselves the poor. We indeed know what is the influence of poverty and pressing want, when men are oppressed with famine; they would rather a hundred times sell their life, than not to rescue themselves even by an invaluable price: for what else is food but the support of life? Men therefore will ever value their life more than all other things. Hence the Prophet condemns this iniquity—that the rich gaped for such an opportunity. They saw that corn was high in price; "Now is the time for the poor to come into our possession; for we hold them as though they were ensnared; so then we can buy them for a pair of shoes." But the other circumstance increases this iniquity,—that they sold the refuse of the wheat; and when they reduced to bondage the poor, they did not feed them; they mingled filth and offscourings with the wheat, as it is wont to be done; for we know that such robbers usually do this, when want presses upon the common people; they sell barley for wheat, and for barley they sell chaff and refuse. This kind of wrong is not new or unusual, as we learn from this passage. Now follows a denunciation of punishment—

7. The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works.

7. Juravit Jehova per excellentiam Jacob, Si obliviscar unquam omnia opera eorum.

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God, having made known the vices of the rich, now shows that he would be their judge and avenger: for were they only reproved, they would not have cared much, like the usurer mentioned by Horace, who said, "The people may hiss me, but I felicitate myself." So also these robbers were wont to do, when they were filled: though the whole people exclaimed against them, though God thundered from heaven, they laughed everything to scorn; for they were utterly destitute of every shame; and they were also become hardened; and insatiable cupidity had so blinded and demented them, that they had cast aside every care for what was right and becoming. Since it was so, God now declares that they could not escape punishment; and that this threatening might more effectually penetrate into their hearts, the Prophet makes use of an oath in the name of God, *Jehovah*, he says, *hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob.*

An old interpreter hath rendered the words, "He hath sworn against the pride of Jacob:" but he did not sufficiently consider the design of the Prophet; for he speaks not here of vice, but of that dignity which the Lord had conferred on the posterity of Abraham; for we have before seen this expression, 'I abhor the excellency of Jacob.' Some give this rendering, "I abhor the pride of Jacob," as though God were speaking there of perverse haughtiness. But he, on the contrary, means, that the Israelites were deceived, for they thought themselves safe and secure, because they were introduced into great favour by a singular privilege. "This," the Lord says, "will profit them nothing: I have hitherto been kind and bountiful to the children of Abraham; but I now abhor this whole dignity." So also he says now in this place, *Jehovah hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob.* They were proud of their dignity, which yet was the free gift of God. Hence God interposes a form of oath, the fittest to reprove their presumption. Some at the same time give this translation, "By myself, (at least they give this explanation,) by myself have I sworn:" for God was the glory of Jacob. Others think that by this word, גְּאוֹן, *gaun*, is designated the sanctuary; for this was the excellency of Jacob, because God had chosen it as a habitation for himself in the midst of his

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people: hence, also, He is often said to dwell between the cherubim; not that he was inclosed in the sanctuary, but because the people perceived there his presence, his favour, and his power. But I rather understand by the term, excellency, in this place, the adoption, by which God had separated for himself that people from the rest of the world. *Sworn* then *hath Jehovah.* How? *By the excellency of Jacob:* and thus he glances in a severe manner at the ingratitude of the people, as they did not own themselves to be in every respect bound to God; for they had been peculiarly chosen, when yet other nations in many things excelled them. It was doubtless an invaluable favour for that ignoble people to have been chosen to be God's peculiar possession and heritage. Hence the Prophet now rightly introduces God as being angry; and the form of the oath is suited to set forth the people's ingratitude: "What! do ye now rise up against me, and elevate your horns? By what right? Under what pretext? Who are ye? I chose you, and ye truly repay me with this reward,—that though ye owe me all things, ye seek to defraud me of my right. I therefore swear by the excellency of Jacob,—I swear by the benefits which I conferred on you,—that I will not allow that which is justly precious in my sight to be disgracefully profaned. Whatever then I have hitherto bestowed on you, I will return on your own heads, and, as ye deserve, ye shall miserably perish." This is the meaning.

We hence see that the oath which the Prophet uses, ought to be applied to the present case. He says, *I shall never forget all your works,* that is, none of your works shall be passed by unpunished. For though conscience sometimes disturbs hypocrites, yet they think that many things may be concealed; and if the hundredth part, or at farthest the tenth, must be accounted for, they think this to be quite enough: "Why! God may perhaps observe this or that, but many faults will escape him." Since then hypocrites thus heedlessly deceive themselves, the Prophet says, "Nothing can ever be hid from my sight; nay, as I now know all their works, I will show that all their sins are recorded in my

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books, in my memory, so that all things shall at last be called to an account." It now follows—

8. Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? and it shall rise up wholly as a flood; and it shall be cast out and drowned, as *by* the flood of Egypt.

8. Annon super hoc tumultuabitur terra, et lugebit quicunque habitat in ea? et ascendet quasi flumen tota (*vel*, elevabitur,) et profligabitur et submergetur quasi à fluvio Ægypti.

He confirms what the last verse contains in other words: and the question is emphatical, for it is a double affirmation. A question, we know, is usually put, when there is no measure of doubt on the subject. God then asks here as of a thing certain, how they could remain in safety, who had so perverted every thing right and just, who had violated all equity, who were influenced by no feelings of humanity,—how could such continue safe? It was impossible. We hence see why the Prophet here uses a question; it was, that he might more fully confirm what he declares.

Shall not the land, he says, *make a tumult?*[1] when these disturb all order, when they mingle, as the proverb is, heaven and earth together, can the earth remain quiet under such a violent confusion? when all reason and equity is confounded, how, he says, can the land do otherwise than make a tumult? And though the Prophet ascribes not here either clamour or speech to the land; it is yet a sort of personification, when he says that the earth must necessarily make a tumult, while it sustains such inhabitants; for between them there was no agreement. Since then their way of living was extremely turbulent, the land itself must necessarily be agitated.

He afterwards adds, *And mourn shall every one who dwells in it.* He now shows that the inhabitants of the earth shall feel that commotion of which he predicts: for the earth, ceasing to fulfil its offices, constrains its inhabitants to lament and mourn. And then there is another metaphor which sets forth the moving of the earth, that it will rise as a river to destroy men with a deluge. Many render what follows, "It

[1] Shake or move is the most current meaning of the word, and the most suitable to this place. *Newcome* renders it, "be shaken;" *Henderson*, "tremble;" and *Grotius*, "be moved."—*Ed.*

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shall be driven away and closed up like the river of Egypt." But after the Prophet has spoken of inundation of the earth, he turns his discourse to the men whom this inundation would drown and swallow up. Hence, the real sense is, that their habitations would be destroyed, as by a deep gulf, in a way similar to the Nile, which, by overflowing the whole country, seems to make a sea of what had been inhabited. As the Prophet's words lead us as by the hand, I wonder how those skilful in the Hebrew language could have blended things so different, for they give this explanation, "The land shall be raised up, as a river, and then it shall be destroyed and driven away;" and they refer this to the land; and then, "it shall be sunk down:" this also they apply to the land; except that some give this rendering, "It shall discharge itself like the river of Egypt." But I translate otherwise, "It shall heave up whole as a river, and shall be driven away, and shall be immersed as by the river of Egypt." *It shall heave up*, he says, that is, *the land as a river;* so that there will be no habitation for men: "I have given this land to my people that they might live in it; but the land itself shall heave up as a river; there shall be an inundation of the whole land." And then when he says, *It shall be driven away and sunk*, this ought not to be referred to the land itself, but to the inhabitants or to the people.[1]

[1] A different view is given by *Newcome* and also by *Henderson*. *Newcome* translates thus,—

And *shall not* all of it rise up as the river,
And be driven out *of its place* and sunk down as the river of Egypt?

Henderson renders the lines in the same sense, though in different words,—

Shall not all of it rise like the river?
Shall it not be driven and subside
Like the river of Egypt?

The question is unnecessarily retained, borrowed from the first line of the verse. It is seldom, if ever, that this is the case in Hebrew: it is not consistent with the simplicity of the language. It is evidently the earthquake that is here compared to the rising and subsiding of a river. I would therefore render the whole verse thus,—

Shall not for this the land shake,
And every inhabitant in it mourn?
For heave up as a river shall the whole of it,
And it shall be agitated and subside like the river of Egypt.

Here is the heaving, the agitation, and the subsidence of the earth in an earthquake.—*Ed.*

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He had said before, כאר, *kar*, as a river; but now he says, כיאור, *kiaur*, which I explain as meaning, as by the river of Egypt. The Nile, we know, overflows annually and covers the whole plain of Egypt. The Prophet therefore borrowed a similitude from the Nile; and he says, that such would be God's vengeance, that the land would be like a river, and its dwellings would be immersed and carried away, or annihilated: for when there is no surface of land, it seems to have been cleared away. So then he says now, *It shall be driven away, it shall be sunk.* This is the simple explanation; and ע, *oin*, is to be understood; for שקעו, *shiko*, is to sink or to cover. Here ה, *he*, is only put, but ע, *oin*, is to be understood; and there is also a double reading pointed out.[1] We now then perceive the Prophet's meaning. But it follows—

9. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in a clear day.

9. Et accidet die illa, inquit Dominus Jehova, ut occumbere faciam (*vel*, descendere faciam) solem in meridie, et obtenebrescere faciam terram in die lucido.

The Prophet speaks here metaphorically of the punishments which were then to the people nigh at hand: and as prosperity and success deceived the Israelites, the Prophet makes use of this significative mode of speaking: "Ye congratulate yourselves on account of your wealth and other things which delight you, as though God could not turn light into darkness; and as God spares you, ye think that it will ever be the same with you; but God can, he says, turn light into darkness: a dark night therefore will overtake you even at mid-day." We now understand why the Prophet employed this figurative expression,—that God would obscure the sun, or cause it to go down, and would on a clear day send darkness to obscure the earth. It was not, it is certain, the eclipse of the sun; and the Prophet did not mean this. But these figurative expressions must be first noticed, and then we must see what they import.

Were any one disposed to lay hold on what is literal and to cleave to it, his notions would be gross and insipid, not

[1] He means evidently the *Keri*, the marginal reading.—*Ed.*

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only with regard to the writings of the Prophets, but also with regard to all other writings; for there is no language which has not its figurative expressions. There is then in this passage a remarkably significative mode of speaking,—that God would make the sun to go down or to become cloudy at mid-day. But we must especially notice the design of the Prophet, which was to show, that the Israelites trusting in their prosperity, thought themselves to be beyond the reach of danger; hence their security and hence their torpor, and at length their perverseness and their contempt of God: since then the Prophet saw that they abused the benefits of God, he says, "What! the Lord indeed has caused your sun to rise; but cannot he make it to set, yea, even at mid-day? Ye now exult in its light; but God will suddenly and unexpectedly send darkness to cover your heads." There is then no reason for hypocrites to flatter themselves, when God smiles on them and treats them indulgently; for in this manner he invites them to repentance by the sweetness of his goodness, as Paul says in the second chapter to the Romans. But when he sees them stubbornly wanton, then he turns his benefits into punishments. This then is what the Prophet means: "God," he says, "will make the sun to set at mid-day, and will darken the clear day." Let us go on—

10. And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only *son*, and the end thereof as a bitter day.

10. Et convertam dies festos vestros in luctum, et omnia cantica vestra in lamentum; et ascendere faciam super omnia dorsa (*vel*, super omnes lumbos) saccum, et super omne caput calvitium; et ponam eam quasi luctum (*vel potius*, quasi in luctu) unigeniti, et posteritatem ejus quasi in die amaritudinis.

The Prophet pursues the same subject; but he omits the figurative mode which he had before adopted. He therefore denounces vengeance more openly,—that God would turn their festal-days into mourning, and their songs into lamentation. This was designedly mentioned; for the Israelites, we know, flattered themselves on account of their ceremonies, by which at the same time they more and more provoked God's displeasure: for the worship of God, which they

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pretended to perform, was mere superstition, and was therefore a profanation of true religion. Though then they thus brought on themselves God's judgment by their wicked ceremonies, they yet thought that they were sufficiently disguised; for as Jeremiah says, ceremonies are to hypocrites the dens of robbers, (Jer. vii.) So here the Prophet speaks expressly of festal-days and of songs,—"Think ye that I am pacified on your feast-days, when ye offer sacrifices to me, or rather to idols under my name; and think ye that I am delighted with your songs? these things are so regarded by me, that they the more excite my wrath. *Your festal-days* then *will I turn to mourning, and your songs to lamentation.*" At the same time, the Prophet threatens generally what we have before noticed,—that there would be mourning among the whole people for having too long abused the forbearance of God; *I will* then *turn your joy into mourning.* This is the sum of the whole. We have already shown why he names feast-days and songs, and that is, because they thought them to be expiations to turn aside God's vengeance, when yet they were fans by which they kindled more and more the fire of his displeasure.

He afterwards adds, *I will make to come up on all backs the sackcloth, and on every head baldness.* These are various modes of speaking, which refer to the same thing: for they were wont to put on sackcloth, and they were wont to shave their heads when in grief and mourning. The Prophet then means, that there would be extreme sorrow among the people, that having cast away all delights, they would be constrained to give up themselves entirely to weeping, lamentation, and grief. I will then make to come up on all loins the sackcloth, that is, I will make each one to put off all valuable and soft clothing and to put on sackcloth; and also to shave their heads, and even to tear off their hair, as they were wont to do. We indeed know that the orientals were more disposed to adopt external tokens of sorrow than we are. It was in truth the levity of that country that accounts for their playing the part of actors in mourning; and from this practice of mourning our Prophet borrowed his mode of speaking.

He afterwards subjoins, *I will set her* (he speaks of the Israelites under the name of land) *in mourning as for an only-*

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begotten. This similitude occurs also in another place, 'They shall mourn as for an only-begotten,' says Zechariah in the twelfth chapter; so also in other places; so that there is no need of a long explanation. For when one has many children and one dies, he patiently bears his death; but when any one is bereaved of an only-begotten, there is no end nor moderation to his grief; for there is no comfort remaining. This is the reason why the Prophet says, that there would be grief, such as that which is felt for an only-begotten.

And he shows that these calamities would not be for a short time only, *Her posterity*, he says, *shall be as in the day of bitterness*.[1] For hypocrites drive away, or at least moderate, their fear of punishment by imagining that God will not be so severe and rigid but for a short time,—"O! it cannot be God will for long punish our sins; but it will be like mist which soon passes away." Thus hypocrites felicitate themselves. Then the Prophet does not without reason subjoin this second clause, that their posterity shall be as in the day of bitterness. Hence, when they shall think themselves freed from all evils, then new ones shall succeed, so that their posterity shall even doubly grieve; for they shall feel more bitterness than their fathers. It now follows—

11. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing of the words of the Lord:

11. Ecce dies veniunt, dicit Jehova, quibus mittam famem in terram, non famem panis, neque sitim aquarum, sed audiendi verba Jehovæ:

[1] Both this and the former line are rendered differently by *Newcome*, and more consistently with the words of the original—

And I will make it as a mourning for an only *son*,
And the end thereof as a day of bitterness.

The pronoun "it," and also "thereof," is the feminine ה: *Newcome* refers it to הדברה, this matter, or this event, understood: or in case ארץ, land, be the antecedent, he thinks that כאבל, "as a mourning," should be rendered participially, "as one who mourns." Either of these constructions may suit the original; but another seems preferable. The antecedent to "it" appears to be אבל, "mourning," in the first line of the verse. Our own version is no doubt the correct one, and not that which Calvin adopts; only the last line may be better rendered thus, as *Junius* and *Tremelius* do—

"And the end of it as that of the bitterest day."—*Ed.*

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12. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the south even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find *it*.

12. Et errabunt à mari usque ad mare, et à septentrione usque ad orientem discurrent ad quærendum verbum Jehova, et non invenient.

Here now the Prophet fulminates, for he denounces not temporal punishments, but final destruction, and what proves to be an evidence of reprobation, and that is, that God would deprive the Israelites of every light of truth, so that they would wander as the blind in the dark. It is indeed certain, that they had been before this time bereaved of sound doctrine; for falsehoods and superstitions prevailed among them: and we have seen that in the land of Israel the true and faithful servants of God suffered cruel tyranny. But yet God restrained the people, as it were, against their will; when they fled away from him, and withdrew themselves from under his government, he still goaded them, and tried as by force to restore them to the way of safety. God thus contended with the wickedness of the people for many years, to the time of our Prophet, yea, until the ten tribes were banished; for these, we know, were led to exile first, and at length the kingdom of Israel was abolished; but the Lord ceased not to stretch forth his hand. Now when he saw that the labour of his servants was vain and useless, when he saw that no fruit proceeded from his word, when he saw that his name was profaned and his kindness trodden under foot, he denounced final vengeance, as though he said, "I am now broken down with weariness, I have hitherto borne with your cries, and though by many kinds of punishment I have endeavoured to restore you, I have yet observed a moderate course, that there might not be wanting some remedy for you. It has not, therefore, been my fault that your diseases have not been healed; for I have often sent Prophets to draw you to repentance, but without any success. I will now then take away my word from you." But as celestial doctrine is the spiritual food of the soul, the Prophet rightly adopts this metaphor, that the Lord would send a famine. This figure, then, is borrowed from the efficacy and nature of God's word: for to what purpose does God send to us Prophets and teachers, but to feed us with spiritual food? As he sustains

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our bodies by bread and water, or wine, and other aliments, so also he nourishes our souls and sustains our spiritual life by his word. Since, then, spiritual doctrine is our spiritual aliment, the Prophet very properly says, that there would come a famine.

I will then *send a famine, not of bread or of water, but of hearing the word of God.* The antithesis amplifies or exaggerates the severity of the punishment, as though he had said, that it would be endurable to wander in hunger and thirst, and to seek roots on mountains, and to seek water in distant rivers: but a bodily famine, he says, is not what shall be grievous to them,—what then? They shall be in hunger and thirst, and shall *seek the word of God, and nowhere find it.* But that we may better understand the meaning of the Prophet, we must notice what Paul says,—that we are fed by the Lord as by the head of a family, when the word is offered to us, (Tit. i. 3;) for teachers go not forth of themselves, but when they are sent from above. As then the head of a family provides meat and sustenance for his children and servants, so also the Lord supplies us daily with spiritual food by true and faithful teachers, for they are as it were his hands. Whenever then pure doctrine is offered to us, let us know that the teachers who speak and instruct us by their ministrations are, as it were, the hand of God, who sets food before us, as the head of a family is wont to do to his children: this is one thing. And certainly since the Lord cares for our bodies, we must also know that our souls are not neglected by him: and further, since the earth produces not corn and other things of itself, but God's blessing is the source of all fruitfulness and abundance, is not his word a much more precious food? Shall we then say that it comes to us by chance? It is hence no wonder that the Prophet sets here the deprivation of sound doctrine among God's judgments; as though he said, "Whenever men are faithfully taught, it is a proof of God's singular kindness, and a testimony of his paternal care. As God then has hitherto discharged towards you the office of the kindest father of a family, so now he will deprive you of meat and drink, that is, those which are spiritual." Now, in the second place, we must observe, that when we

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abuse God's bounty, our ingratitude deserves this recompense, —that want should teach us that God ought not to have been despised in his benefits. This is generally true: for when we intemperately indulge in luxury when God gives us abundance of bread and wine, we fully deserve that this intemperance and excess should be cured by famine and want. But bread and wine are of no great value, and soon pass away: when therefore we abuse celestial doctrine, which is far more precious than all earthly things, what punishment does not such wilfulness deserve? It is therefore no wonder that God should take away his word from all ungrateful and profane men, when he sees it treated with mockery or disdain: and this truth ought to be carefully considered by us at this day; for we see with how little reverence the greater part of men receive the celestial doctrine, which at this time is so bountifully offered to us. God has indeed in our age opened the wonderful treasures of his paternal bounty in restoring to us the light of truth. What fear there is now? What religion? Some scoff, some disdain, some indeed profess to receive what is said, but they pass it by negligently, being occupied with the cares and concerns of this world, and some furiously oppose, as the Papists do. Since then the perverseness, or the wickedness, or the carelessness of the world, is so great, what can we expect, but that the Lord will send a much thicker darkness than that in which we have been before immersed, and suffer us to go astray and wander here and there in hunger and thirst? If then we fear God, this punishment, or rather the denunciation of this punishment, ought ever to be before our eyes. And the antithesis also, as it is very important, should be carefully considered; for the Prophet by the comparison increases the punishment: it shall not, he says, be the want of meat and drink, for such a divine visitation would be more tolerable; but it shall be a spiritual famine. Inasmuch then as we are too much entangled by our flesh, these words ought to arouse us, that we may more attentively reflect on this dreadful punishment, and learn to fear the famine or want of the soul more than that of our bodies. When the sterility of the land threatens us with famine, we are all anxiety, and no day passes, in

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which this anxious question does not ten times occur to us,—"What will become of us? We now suffer from famine and want, and we are, as yet, distant from the harvest three or four months." All feel anxious, and in the meantime we are not touched by any concern when the Lord threatens us with spiritual want. Since then we are so disposed to be over-anxious for this frail life, it is the more necessary for us to take notice of the comparison mentioned by our Prophet.

But it may be here asked, Why does he say that they should be so famished as to *run here and there, and wander from sea to sea, from the south even to the east*, since this ought to be counted as one of God's favours; for what more grievous thing can happen to us, than that the Lord should render us stupid and unconcerned? But when we are touched with some desire for sound doctrine, it evidently appears that there is some religion in us; we are not destitute of the Spirit of God, though destitute of the outward medium: and then comes what Christ says, 'Knock, and it shall be opened to you; seek, and ye shall find,' (Matth. vii. 7.) Therefore this denunciation of the Prophet seems not, it is said, so severe and dreadful. But we must observe, that the Prophet does not speak here strictly of famine, as though he said, that the Israelites would feel the want of God's word, that they would really look for it, that they would sincerely seek it, but that they would perceive by the punishment itself, that nothing is more to be dreaded than to be deprived of the spiritual food of the soul. An example of this is found in Esau: when he saw that he had lost his birth-right, he cried and howled. He did not do this either from a right feeling, or because he had returned to a sound mind; but he was urged on by despair only: and then he sent forth lamentations and howlings, as though he were a wild beast. An anxiety like this is what the Prophet describes here. We hence learn, that the reprobate, when they see themselves deprived of God's favours, are not really moved, so that they repent, but only feel strong agonies, so that they torment themselves without any benefit, and do not turn themselves to God.

What then is this to *seek?* We must notice what he said before—that they shall *wander from sea to sea*, and then, that

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they shall *run here and there.* When the faithful perceive any token of God's wrath, they immediately conclude and clearly see, that there is no remedy but to betake themselves directly to God: but the ungodly, what do they do? They disquiet themselves, and make a great noise. It is then this empty and false feeling of which the Prophet speaks. Now then the question is answered. But we must at the same time observe, what the best way is to recover the favour of God, when we are deprived of it; and it is this,—to consider our state, and to return to him under a due consciousness of God's judgment, and to seek to be reconciled to him. Thus will he restore what he has taken away. But if our obstinacy be like that of the Israelites, God will deprive us of his benefits, and not only those which are necessary to support our present life, but also of the spiritual food of the soul: then in vain will our howlings rend the air, for he will not give us an upright spirit to return to him; but we shall in vain bite the bridle, we shall in vain torment ourselves: for he will not suffer us to come where we ought, that is, he will not lead us to true repentance nor to a genuine calling on him, but we shall pine away in our evils without any remedy.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou continuest to recall us to thyself, and though thou seest us to be alienated from thee, thou yet dost extend thy hand to us, and often exhort and stimulate us by holy admonitions, and even frighten us by punishments, that we may not run headlong to our own ruin,—O grant, that we may not be deaf to admonitions so holy and gracious, nor be hardened against thy threatenings, but that we may become instantly submissive, and also return to the right way and constantly proceed in it, and follow our vocation through our whole life, as long as thou continuest it to us, until we at length reach the mark which is set before us, even until we be gathered into thy celestial kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Lecture Sixty-seventh.

13. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst.

14. They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy God, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beersheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.

13. In die illa deficient virgines decoræ et adolescentes præ siti.

14. Jurantes in peccato Samariæ, et qui dicunt, Vivit Deus tuus, Dan; et, Vivit via Barsaba; et cadent et non resurgent amplius.

The Prophet, having threatened spiritual famine, now adds, that the people would in every respect be barren and destitute of every good: for I take not thirst here in the same sense as before; but that they should be dried up through the want of all things. It is indeed the worst deprivation when men are parched up with thirst; and this is what the Prophet threatens here. A country may suffer from want of provision, while there is water enough to drink; but when not even this remains, it is an evidence of a heavier and of almost the extreme curse of God. We now perceive what the Prophet meant, which was this,—that when God should take away his word, by which the souls of men are nourished up to eternal life, the Israelites would be then in want also of all blessings, so that they would not only be without bread, but also without water; and he mentions a circumstance which would greatly aggravate the evil, *Faint*, he says, *shall the fair virgins and the youth* in their vigour. It seems unnatural, that those who are vigorous, and can run to get supply for their wants, should faint: but the Prophet, as I have said, wished to show that there would be no escape, but that God would distress the strongest, when he sent such a famine, and with it the want also of drink.

He afterwards mentions the reason why the Lord would inflict such punishments on his people; it was, because they had prostituted themselves to wicked superstitions; *They swear*, he says, *by the sin of Samaria; they say, Live does thy God, Dan; Live does the way of Beersheba.* Some understand "sin" here metaphorically, (as it is taken also in many other places,) as meaning sin-offerings, which are called by the Hebrews אשמות, *ashimut*, and by the Latins *piacula*—expia-

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tions: but this exposition is too refined. The Prophet then speaks only of the idols of Israelites: and they are called wickedness (*scelus*) or sin, because superstitious men, we know, delight in their own devices. He therefore calls an idol *sin* by way of reproach, though they gave it the honourable name of a god. *They swear*, he says, *in* or *by the sin of Samaria*. He calls it the sin of *Samaria*, for thence arose all their corruptions, it being the royal residence and the chief city of the whole country. Since then superstition proceeded from thence, the Prophet does not without reason say that all the idolatry, throughout the whole land, was the sin of Samaria; for he regarded the source where impiety originated.

And he afterwards explains himself by saying, *Live does thy God, Dan;* and, *Live does the way of Beersheba:* for we know that temples were raised both in Dan and in Beersheba. He then subjoins two forms of an oath, but for this end,—to show the character of the sin of Samaria, which he mentions. *They swear* then *by the gods of Samaria*, who were really detestable; for there is no greater atrocity in the sight of God than idolatry: but he afterwards adds, that they were gods who were worshipped at Dan and at Beersheba. What some say of the word דרך, *darek*, that it means pilgrimage or the way that leads there, is frivolous and puerile; for the Prophet, no doubt, used a common expression. He therefore calls custom *the way of Beersheba*, such as then was by common consent received and approved. *They* then *who swear* by these fictitious forms of worship *shall be parched*, or pine away, *with thirst.*

He then adds, *They shall fall, and rise again no more;* that is, their stroke shall be incurable, for God has hitherto employed moderate punishments, which could not heal them, as they had been obdurate in their evils. The Prophet then declares now that there would be no more any prospect of a remedy for them, and that the wound which God would inflict would be fatal, without any hope of being healed. This is the meaning. Let us now proceed—

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CHAPTER IX.

1. I saw the Lord standing upon the altar; and he said, Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake, and cut them in the head, all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword: he that fleeth of them shall not flee away, and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered.

1. Vidi Dominum stantem super altare, et dixit, Percute superliminare et commovebuntur postes, et affliget (*vel*, affligе, *in modo imperativo*) in capite omnes, et novissimum ipsorum (*vel*, posteritatem) gladio occidam; non effuget ex ipsis fugiens, neque evadet ex ipsis qui evadit.

The Prophet confirms the threatening which we have already explained; for he says, that the people would be soon removed, as there was now no hope of repentance. But it must first be observed, that he speaks not here of the profane temples which Jeroboam the first had built in Dan and in Bethel, but of the true and lawful temple; for it would not have been befitting that this vision should have been made to the Prophet in one of those profane temples, from which, we know, God was far away. Had God appeared in Dan or Bethel, it would have been an indirect approbation of superstition. They are then mistaken who think that the vision was given to the Prophet in any other place than on mount Zion, as we have shown in other places. For the Prophets say not, that God had spoken either in Dan or in Bethel, nor had there been any oracle announced from these places; for God designed in every way to show that he had nothing to do with those profane rites and abominations. It is then certain that God appeared to his Prophet on mount Zion, and on the lawful altar. [1]

Let us now see the design of the vision. The greater part of interpreters think that the destruction of the kingdom and of the priesthood is predicted here, at the time when Zedekiah was taken and led ignominiously into exile, and when his children were killed, and when afterwards the temple was

[1] Calvin is not without many expounders, who agree with him in this view; yet the reasons assigned do not apply. "Though the true God," as *Dr Henderson* justly observes, "was seen beside the idolatrous altar, it was not for the purpose of receiving homage, but of commanding that the whole of the erection and worship at Bethel should be destroyed." —*Ed.*

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erased and the city demolished. But this prediction, I doubt not, ought to be extended much farther, even to the many calamities which immediately followed, by which at length the whole people were destroyed. I therefore do not confine what is here said to the demolition of the city and of the temple. But the meaning of the Prophet is the same as though he had said, that the Israelites as well as the Jews in vain boasted of their descent and of other privileges with which they had been honoured: for the Lord had resolved to destroy them, and also the temple, which they employed as a cloak to cover their iniquities. We now then understand the intention of the Prophet. But this also must be noticed,—that if the Lord spared not his own temple, which he had commanded to be built, and in which he had chosen a habitation for himself, those profane temples, which he had ever despised, could not possibly escape destruction. We now see the design of this prophecy, which is the last, with the exception of the promise that is given, of which we shall speak in its proper place.

He says then that he *saw God standing on the altar*. The Prophet might have heard what follows without a vision; but God then, we know, was wont to sanction his predictions by visions, as we find in the twelfth chapter of Numbers. God then not only intended to commit to his Prophet what he was to proclaim, but also to add authority to his doctrine; and the vision was as it were the seal, which the Israelites as well as the Jews knew to be a proof, that what the Prophet declared by his mouth proceeded from heaven.

It now follows, *Smite the lintel*. כפתור, *caphtur*, is, I think, called the cover which is on the top of the posts of the temple; for the Hebrews call כפתוריים, *caphturim*, apples. As then they painted there pomegranates and flowers, the Hebrew doctors think that the part which is above the two posts of the temple is called כפתור, *caphtur*. But that part of the entrance might have taken its name from its round form. However this may be, they called the highest part of the porch of the temple כפתור, *caphtur*. Now the posts sustained that which they commonly called the lintel. God then says, *Strike the lintel, and let the posts be moved*, or let them

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shake, let the whole gate of the temple shake. Then he adds, And strike and break *all on the head*, or on the head of all. This verb is differently read by interpreters. Correctly, according to the rule of grammar, it ought to be read in the third person, *and it will dash to the ground.* But some, however, render it thus, *and dash to the ground*, or break, because he had said before *Smite.* As to the meaning, it matters not much, for an explanation immediately follows. Now as to what he says, *on the head*, and as to the word אחריתם, *achritam*, which follows, some by the head understand the priests and the rulers of the people, which view I am inclined to embrace; but when they explain אחרית, *achrit*, to mean posterity or children, it does not seem to suit this place; for it ought rather, as I think, to be referred to the common people. As then the Prophet had spoken of the head, he now adds the people in general. The Hebrews call whatever follows or comes after, by אחרית, *achrit.* They indeed understand posterity by it, but it is a word that has variety of meaning: for it is taken for end, for a footstep, in short, for anything that comes after. [1]

[1] These two lines are variously explained. The words can hardly admit the meaning here given to them. The scene was in the temple, and worshippers were present. The command was to strike the lintel; the fall of the pillars or posts was the consequence: many were destroyed, and those who remained were to be killed by the sword, and not one was to escape. There seems to be here an allusion to two previous events—the shaking and pulling down of the pillars of the house of Dagon by Sampson,—and the slaughter of the priests of Baal by Jehu. I render the verse thus:—

I saw the Lord standing on the altar, and he said,—

"Strike the lintel, that the pillars may shake,
And break them down on the head of them all;
And the remainder of them with the sword will I slay;
Flee away from them shall not he who fleeth,
And escape from them shall not he who escapeth."

Junius and *Tremelius*, as well as *Dathius*, render the third and fourth lines, where the difficulty alone exists, according to the version given above; and *Henderson* renders the third line materially the same,—

And break them in pieces on the heads of them all.

But he retains "posterity" in the fourth line, which seems not consistent with the tenor of the passage.

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It is easy now to gather the meaning of the Prophet: A vision was exhibited to him, which showed that it was decreed by God himself to smite both the chiefs and the common people: and since God begins with his temple, how can profane men hope for pardon, who had deserted the true and pure worship of God? They were all apostates: how then could they have hoped that God would be placable to them, inasmuch as he had broken down his own temple?

He now adds, *I will slay with the sword, &c.* We see then that this vision is to be referred to the stroke which was shortly after to be inflicted. I will slay then with the sword whatever follows, that is, the common people.

He afterwards says, *Flee away from them shall not he who fleeth, nor shall he escape from them who escapeth;* that is, though they may think that flight is possible, their expectation will deceive them, for I shall catch them. Had the Prophet said, that there would be to them no means of fleeing away, he would not have spoken with so much severity; but when he says, that when they fled, he would catch them, that when they thought that they had escaped, there would be no safety to them, he says what is much more grievous. In short, he cuts off all hope from the Israelites, that they might understand that they were certain to perish, because God had hitherto tried in vain to restore them to the right way. Inasmuch then as they had been wholly incurable, they now hear that no hope remained for them.

And since the Prophet denounces such and so dreadful a destruction of an elect people, and since the vision was

The version of *Junius* and *Tremelius* is this,—

> Et divide ipsos in capite ipsorum omnium,
> Quod autem post ipsos est gladio interficiam.

Dathius is more paraphrastic, and gives the same sense,—

> Eosque diffinde *ut ruant* in caput omnium *qui adsunt*,
> Reliquos verò gladio interficiam.

Newcome, who is too fond of emendations, follows *Houbigant*, who, for no reason that appears, turns the verb into the first person; and he gives this rendering of the third line,—

> For I will wound them in the head, *even* all of them:

But this evidently does not comport with the context.—*Ed.*

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exhibited to him in the temple, there is no reason for us to trust in our outward profession, and to wait till God's judgments come, as we see many are doing in our day, who are wholly careless, because they think that no evil can happen to them, inasmuch as they bear the name of God. But the Prophet here shows, that God sits in his temple, not only to protect those whom he has adopted as his people and peculiar possession, but also to vindicate his own honour, because the Israelites had corrupted his worship; and the Jews also had departed from true religion. Since then impiety everywhere prevailed, he now shows that God sits there as the punisher of sins, that his people may know that they are not to tolerate those evils, which for a time he does not punish, as though he had forgotten his office, or that he designs his favour to be the cover of their iniquity; but because he designs by degrees to draw to repentance those who are healable, and at the same time to take away every excuse from the reprobate. Let us proceed—

2. Though they dig into hell, thence shall my hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down;

3. And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them:

4. And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good.

2. Si foderint ad sepulchrum (*vel*, ad infernum,) inde manus mea educet vos; et si ascenderint in cœlos, inde detraham eos;

3. Et si occultaverint se in fastigio (*vel*, culmine) Carmeli, inde scrutabor et extraham eos; et si absconditi fuerint ab oculis meis (*ad verbum*, è regione oculorum meorum) in profundo (*vel*, pavimento, in fundo ipso) maris, inde mandabo serpenti ut mordeat eos:

4. Et si profecti fuerint in captivitatem coram inimicis suis, inde mandabo gladio ut occidat eos; et ponam oculum meum super eos in malum et non in bonum.

Here the Prophet denounces horrible punishments; but not without reason, for there was astonishing torpidity in that people, as there is usually in all hypocrites, when they have any shadow of excuse. They were then the only elect people in the whole world. When, therefore, they thought that they excelled others, and that they were endued with singular privileges beyond all other nations, this glory inebriated them,

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and they imagined that God was in a manner bound to them, as we have seen in other places. This, then, was the reason why the Prophet in so many ways enlarged on the judgment of God on hypocrites; it was, that they might be terrified by the vehemence and severity of his words.

Hence he says, *If they dig for themselves passages to hell*, that is, to the centre of the earth, for שְׁאוֹל, *shaul*, is here put for the centre; *thence shall my hand draw them forth;* and then, *If they ascend to heaven, thence I will draw them down*, saith the Lord; *If they hide themselves in deserts, if they flee to the top of Carmel, I will trace them out:* in short, they shall find no corner either in heaven, or on the earth, or in the sea, where they can be hid from my sight. There is no need here to understand by heaven, high citadels, as the Chaldean paraphraser explains it: it is a frigid paraphrase. But the Prophet speaks in an hyperbolical language of the centre of the earth, of the heavens, and of the deep of the sea; as though he had said, "Should all the elements open themselves for hiding-places, yet the Israelites shall in vain try to escape, for I will follow them when sunk in the depth of the sea, I will draw them down from heaven itself; there shall, in a word, be no hiding-place for them either above or below."

We now understand the Prophet's meaning; and an useful warning may be hence gathered,—that when God threatens us, we in vain seek subterfuges, as his hand extends itself to the lowest deep as well as to heaven; as it is said in Ps. cxxxix. 7, 'Where shall I flee from thy presence, O Lord? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there; if I descend to the grave, thou art present; if I take the wings of the dawn, (or, of the morning star,) and dwell in the extremities of the sea, there also shall thy hand lead me.' The Prophet speaks not in that psalm, as some have very absurdly philosophised, of the unlimited essence of God; but he rather shows, that we are always in his sight. So then we ought to feel assured that we cannot escape, whenever God designs to make a scrutiny as to our sins, and to summon us to his tribunal.

But we must at the same time remember, that the Prophet has not employed a superfluous heap of words; there is not here one syllable which is not important, though at the first

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view it seems to be otherwise. But the Holy Spirit, as I have already reminded you, knowing our heedlessness, does here shake off all our self-flatteries. There is in us, we know, an innate torpor by nature, so that we despise all threatenings, or at least we are not duly moved by them. As the Lord sees us to be so careless, he rouses us by his goads. Whenever then Scripture denounces punishment on us, let us at the same time learn to join with it what the Prophet here relates; "Thou hast to do with God, what canst thou effect now by evasions? though thou climbest to heaven, the Lord can draw thee down; though thou descendest to the abyss, God's hand will thence draw thee forth; if thou seekest a hiding-place in the lowest depths, he will thence also bring thee forth to the light; and if thou hidest thyself in the deep sea, he will there find thee out; in a word, wherever thou betakest thyself, thou canst not withdraw thyself from the presence and from the hand of God." We hence see the design of all these expressions, and that is, that we may not think of God as of ourselves, but that we may know that his power extends to all hiding-places. But these words ought to be subjects of meditation, though it be sufficient for our purpose to include in few words what the Prophet had in view. But as we are so entangled in our vain confidences, the Prophet, as I have said, has not in vain used so many words.

Now, as to what he says, *I will command the serpent to bite them*, some understand by נחש, *nuchesh*, not a serpent on land, but the whale, or some other marine animal, as the leviathan, which is mentioned in Scripture; and we may learn from other parts of Scripture that נחש, *nuchesh*, means not only a serpent, but also a whale or some animal living in the sea. In a word, God intimates, that he would be armed everywhere, whenever he should resolve to punish his adversaries, and that in all elements are means in readiness, by which he can destroy the wicked, who seek to escape from his hand.

Now when he says, *If they go into captivity among their enemies, I will there command the sword to slay them*, some interpreters confine this part to that foolish flight, when a certain number of the people sought to provide for their safety

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by going down into Egypt. Johanan followed them, and a few escaped, (Jer. xliii. 2:) but according to what Jeremiah had foretold, when he said, 'Bend your necks to the king of Babylon, and the Lord will bless you; whosoever will flee to Egypt shall perish;' so it happened: they found this to be really true, though they had ever refused to believe the prediction. Jeremiah was drawn there contrary to the wish of his own mind: he had, however, pronounced a curse on all who thought that it would be an asylum to them. But the Lord permitted him to be drawn there, that he might to his last breath pronounce the Woe, which they had before heard from his mouth. But I hardly dare thus to restrict these expressions of the Prophet: I therefore explain them generally, as meaning, that exile, which is commonly said to be a civil death, would not be the end of evils to the Israelites and to the Jews; for even when they surrendered themselves to their enemies, and suffered themselves to be led and drawn away wherever their enemies pleased, they could not yet even in this way preserve their life, because the Lord would command the sword to pursue them even when exiles. This, in my view, is the real meaning of the Prophet.

He at last subjoins, *I will set my eyes on them for evil, and not for good.* There is a contrast to be understood in this clause: for the Lord had promised to be a guardian to his people, according to what is said in Ps. cxxi. 4, 'Behold, he who guards Israel neither sleeps nor slumbers.' As hypocrites ever lay hold on the promises of God without repentance and faith, without any religious feeling, and afterwards turn them to support their vain boasting, the Prophet therefore says here, that the eye of God would be upon them, not indeed in his wonted manner to protect them, as he had done from the beginning, but, on the contrary, to accumulate punishment on punishment: it was the same thing as though he said, "As I have hitherto watched over the safety of this people, whom I have chosen for myself, so I will hereafter most sedulously watch, that I may omit no kind of punishment, until they be utterly destroyed."

And this sentence deserves to be specially noticed; for we are reminded, that though the Lord does not indeed spare

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unbelievers, he yet more closely observes us, and that he will punish us more severely, if he sees us to be obstinate and incurable to the last. Why so? Because we have come nearer to him, and he looks on us as his family, placed under his eyes; not that anything is hid or concealed from him, but the Scripture speaks after the manner of men. While God then favours his people with a gracious look, he yet cannot endure hypocrites; for he minutely observes their vices, that he may the more severely punish them. This then is the substance of the whole. It follows—

5. And the Lord God of hosts *is* he that toucheth the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwell therein shall mourn: and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and shall be drowned, as *by* the flood of Egypt.

5. Et Dominus Jehova exercituum percutiet terram, et contremiscet; et lugebunt omnes habitantes in ea, et ascendet sicut fluvius tota, et submergetur sicut à fluvio Egypti.

The Prophet repeats here nearly the same words with those we explained yesterday: he used then the similitude of a flood, which he again mentions here. But as the first clause is capable of various explanations, I will refer to what others think, and then to what I deem the most correct view. This sentence, that the earth trembles, when it is smitten by God, is usually regarded as a general declaration; and the Prophets do often exalt the power of God in order to fill us with fear, and of this we shall see an instance in the next verse. Yet I doubt not but that this is a special threatening. *The Lord Jehovah*, then, he says, *will smite the land, and it will tremble.*

Then follows the similitude of which we spoke yesterday, *Mourn shall all who dwell in it;* and then, *It will altogether ascend as a river.* Here he intimates that there would be a deluge, so that the face of the earth would not appear. Ascend then shall the land as a river. The ascent of the earth would be nothing else but inundation, which would cover its surface. He afterwards adds, *and it shall be sunk;* that is, every convenience for dwelling: this is not to be understood strictly, as I have said, of the land, but is rather to be referred to men, or to the use which men make of the earth. *Sunk* then *shall it be as by the river of Egypt.* We

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have said that Egypt loses yearly its surface, when the Nile inundates it. But as the inundation of the river is given to the Egyptians for fertilizing the land and of rendering its produce more abundant, so the Prophet here declares that the land would be like the sea, so that there would no longer be any habitation. It now follows—

6. *It is* he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord is his name.	6. Ædificans in cœlis ascensiones suas, et coagmentationem suam super terram fundans (qui fundat,) qui vocat aquas maris et effundit eas super faciem terræ, Jehova nomen ejus.[1]

The Prophet describes now in general terms the power of God, that he might the more impress his hearers, and that they might not heedlessly reject what he had previously threatened respecting their approaching ruin; for he had said, 'Lo, God will smite the land, and it shall tremble.' This was special. Now as men received with deaf ears those threatenings, and thought that God in a manner trifled with them, the Prophet added, by way of confirmation, a striking description of the power of God; as though he said, "Ye do hear what God denounces: now, as he has clothed me with his own authority, and commanded me to terrify you by setting before you your punishment, know ye that you have to do with God himself, whose majesty ought to make you all, and all that you are, to tremble: for what sort of Being is this God, whose word is regarded by you with contempt?

[1] This verse and the preceding are connected together, and form but one period, as it evidently appears from the construction of the words in Hebrew. The following may be considered a literal version:—

5. And the Lord, Jehovah of hosts,—
Who touches the earth and it melts,
And mourn do all who dwell on it,
And it heaves up as a river, the whole of it,
And sinks down as the river of Egypt,—

6. Who builds in the heavens his ascents,
And fixes on the earth his station,
Who calls the waters of the sea,
And pours them forth on the face of the earth,—
Jehovah is his name.—*Ed.*

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God is he *who builds for himself chambers*[1] *in the heavens, who founds his jointings*[2] (some render it bundles) *in the earth, who calls the waters of the sea, and pours them on the face of the earth;* in a word, *he is Jehovah,* whose being is in himself alone: and ye exist only through his power, and whenever he pleases, he can withdraw his Spirit, and then vanish must this whole world, of which ye are but the smallest particles. Since then He alone is God, and there is in you but a momentary strength, and since this great power of God, the evidences of which he affords you through the whole order of nature, is so conspicuous to you, how is it that ye are so heedless?" We now perceive why the Prophet exalts in so striking a manner the power of God.

First, in saying that *God builds for himself* his ascendings (*ascensiones*) *in the heavens,* he alludes, no doubt, to the very structure of the heavens; for the element of air, we know, rises upwards, on account of its being light; and then the element of fire comes nearer to what heaven is; then follow the spheres. As then the whole world above the earth is much more favourable to motion, this is the reason why the Prophet says that God has his ascents in the heavens. God

[1] *Cœnacula,* in other places, *ascensiones,* and more correctly; for מעלות is properly ascents, steps to ascend, stairs; and hence, the places ascended to, chambers.

[2] *Coagmentationes suas*—his joinings, cementings; but אגדתו is in the singular number. It is difficult to ascertain its meaning. It occurs not as a verb, but from its application, its ideal meaning seems to be, to join or bind together, so as to form a compact body. It is applied in 2 Sam. ii. 25, to designate a *troop,* a compact body of men. It signifies in Exod. xii. 22, a *bundle* of hyssop. *Newcome* renders it a *storehouse,* deriving its meaning from the Chaldee; and *Henderson* renders it *vault,* tracing it from the Arabic, and says that it signifies the vault or arch of heaven, the hemispheric expanse, which apparently to the eye is founded on the earth; but a *band* or *troop* has been its most common acceptation.

It must be borne in mind, that it must be something on earth that corresponds or forms a contrast with *ascents* in the heavens. God has his ascendings, or, as it were, his steps or stairs in the heavens, along which, speaking after the manner of men, he ascends: then what has he on earth? It seems to me that something firm, solid, compacted, is intended; and the earth is said to be his footstool. Hence a firm footing, standing, or station, appears to be the meaning of the word.

The French translation is—

Qui fonde son bâtiment sur la terre—

"Who founds his *building* on the earth."—*Ed.*

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indeed stands in no need of the heavens or of the air as an habitation, for he is contained in no place, being one who cannot be contained: but it is said, for the sake of men, that God is above all heavens: he is then located in his own elevated throne. But he says that he founds for himself his jointings (*coagmentationes*) on the earth, for this part of the world is more solid, the element of earth being grosser and denser, and therefore more firm. So also the waters, though lighter than the earth, approach it nearest. *God* then *builds in the heavens.* It is a mechanism which is in itself wonderful: when one raises to heaven his eyes, and then looks on the earth, is he not constrained to stand amazed? The Prophet then exhibits here before our eyes the inconceivable power of God, that we may be impressed by his words, and know with whom we have to do, when he denounces punishment.

He further says, *Who calls the waters of the sea, and pours them on the face of the earth.* This change is in itself astonishing; God in a short time covers the whole heaven: there is a clear brightness, in a moment clouds supervene, which darken the whole heaven, and thick waters are suspended over our heads. Who could say that the whole sky could be so suddenly changed? God by his own command and bidding does all this alone. *He calls* then *the waters of the sea, and pours them down.* Though rains, we know, are formed in great measure by vapours from the earth, yet we also know that these vapours arise from the sea, and that the sea chiefly supplies the dense abundance of moisture. The Prophet then, by taking a part for the whole, includes here all the vapours, by which rain is formed. He calls them the waters of the sea; God by his own power alone creates the rain, by raising vapours from the waters; and then he causes them to descend on the whole face of the earth. Since then the Lord works so wonderfully through the whole order of nature, what do we think will take place, when he puts forth the infinite power of his hand to destroy men, having resolved to execute the extreme judgment which he has decreed?

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PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast showed to us by evidences so remarkable that all things are under thy command, and that we, who live in this world through thy favour, are as nothing, for thou couldest reduce us to nothing in a moment,—O grant, that being conscious of thy power, we may reverently fear thy hand, and be wholly devoted to thy glory; and as thou kindly offerest thyself to us as a Father, may we be drawn by this kindness, and surrender ourselves wholly to thee by a willing obedience, and never labour for any thing through life but to glorify thy name, as thou hast redeemed us through thy only begotten Son, that so we may also enjoy through him that eternal inheritance which is laid up for us in heaven. Amen.

Lecture Sixty-eighth.

7. *Are* ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?

7. Annon sicut filii Æthiopum vos mihi, filii Israel, dicet Jehova? Annon Israel ascendere feci è terra Ægypti? et Philistim ex Cappadocia? et Syrios è Kir?

The Prophet shows here to the Israelites that their dignity would be no defence to them, as they expected. We have indeed seen in many places how foolish was the boasting of that people. Though they were more bound to God than other nations, they yet heedlessly boasted that they were a holy nation, as if indeed they had something of their own, but as Paul says, they were nothing. God had conferred on them singular benefits; but they were adorned with the plumes of another. Foolish then and absurd was their glorying, when they thought themselves to be of more worth in the sight of God than other nations. But as this foolish conceit had blinded them, the Prophet says now, "Whom do you think yourselves to be? *Ye are to me as the children of the Ethiopians.* I indeed once delivered you, not that I should be bound to you, but rather that I should have you bound to me, for ye have been redeemed through my kindness." Some think that the Israelites are compared to the

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Ethiopians, as they had not changed their skin, that is, their disposition; but this view I reject as strained. For the Prophet speaks here more simply, namely, that their condition differed nothing from that of the common class of men: "Ye do excel, but ye have nothing apart from me; if I take away from you what is mine, what will you have then remaining?" The emphasis is on the word, *to me*, What are ye *to me?* For certainly they excelled among men; but before God they could bring nothing, since they had nothing of their own: nay, the more splendidly God adorned them, the more modestly and humbly they ought to have conducted themselves, seeing that they were bound to him for so many of his favours. But as they had forgotten their own condition, despised all the Prophets, and felicitated themselves in their vices, he says, "*Are ye not to me as the children of the Ethiopians*, as foreign and the most alien nations? for what that is worthy of praise can I find in you? If then I look on you, what are ye? I certainly see no reason to prefer you even to the most obscure nations."

He afterwards adds, *Have I not made to ascend*, or brought, *Israel from the land of Egypt?* Here the Prophet reminds them of their origin. Though they had indeed proceeded from Abraham, who had been chosen by God four hundred years before their redemption; yet, if we consider how cruelly they were treated in Egypt, that tyrannical servitude must certainly appear to have been like the grave. They then began to be a people, and to attain some name, when the Lord delivered them from Egypt. The Prophet's language is the same as though he had said, "Look whence the Lord has brought you out; for ye were as a dead carcass, and of no account: for the Egyptians treated your fathers as the vilest slaves: God brought you thence; then you have no nobility or excellency of your own, but the beginning of your dignity has proceeded from the gratuitous kindness of God. Yet ye think now that ye excel others, because ye have been redeemed: God has also redeemed the Philistines, when they were the servants of the Cappadocians; and besides, he redeemed the Syrians, when they were servants to other nations."

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Some take קִיר, *Kir*, to mean Cyrene; but as this is uncertain, I pass it by as doubtful. Whatever it was, there is no ground of dispute about the subject itself; for it is certain that the Israelites are here compared with the Philistines as well as with the Syrians, inasmuch as all had been alike redeemed by the Lord, and this favour was common to all of whom he speaks. As God then pitied in former ages other nations, it was certainly not peculiar to the race of Abraham, that they had been freed by God, and by means of extraordinary miracles: "Even the Philistines will say the same, and the Syrians will say the same; but yet ye say that they are profane nations. Since it is so, ye are now divested of all excellency, that is, there is nothing of your own in you, that ye should exalt yourselves above other nations." This is the meaning. It now follows—

8. Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord.

8. Ecce oculi Domini Jehovæ ad regnum sceleratum, et delebo illud à superficie terræ, præterquam quòd non delendo delebo domum Jacob, dicit Jehova.

9. For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as *corn* is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.

9. Quia ecce ego præcipiam, et agitabo inter cunctas gentes domum Israel, quemadmodum agitatur (*subaudiendum est nomen tritici*, agitatur triticum) in cribo, et non cadet lapis (*id est*, granum) in terram.

Here the Prophet concludes that God would take vengeance on the Israelites as on other nations, without any difference; for they could not set up anything to prevent his judgment. It was indeed an extraordinary blindness in the Israelites, who were doubly guilty of ingratitude, to set up as their shield the benefits with which they had been favoured. Though then the name of God had been wickedly and shamefully profaned by them, they yet thought that they were safe, because they had been once adopted. This presumption Amos now beats down. *Behold*, he says, *the eyes of the Lord Jehovah are upon all the wicked.* Some restrict this to the kingdom of Israel, but, in my opinion, such a view militates against the design of the Prophet. He speaks indefinitely

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of all kingdoms, as though he had said, that God would be the judge of the whole world, that he would spare no kingdoms or countries. God then will show himself everywhere to be the punisher of vices, and will summon all kingdoms before his tribunal, *By destroying, I will destroy from the face of the earth all the ungodly and the wicked.*

Now the second clause I understand otherwise than most do: for they think it contains a mitigation of punishment, as the Prophets are wont to blend promises of favour with threatenings, and as our Prophet does in this chapter. But it seems not to me that anything is promised to the Israelites: nay, if I am not much mistaken, it is an ironical mode of speaking; for Amos obliquely glances here at that infatuated presumption, of which we have spoken, that the Israelites thought that they were safe through some peculiar privilege, and that they were to be exempt from all punishment: "I will not spare unbelievers," he says, "who excuse themselves by comparing themselves with you. Shall I tolerate your sins and not dare to touch you, seeing that you know yourselves to be doubly wicked?" We must indeed notice in what other nations differed from the Israelites; for the more the children of Abraham had been raised, the more they increased their guilt when they despised God, the author of so many blessings, and became basely wanton by shaking off, as it were, the yoke. Since then they so ungratefully abused God's blessings, God might then have spared other nations: it was therefore necessary to bring them to punishment, for they were wholly inexcusable. As then they exceeded all other nations in impiety, the Prophet very properly reasons here from the greater to the less: "I take an account," he says, "of all the sins which are in the world, and no nations shall escape my hand: how then can the Israelites escape? For other nations can plead some ignorance, as they have never been taught; and that they go astray in darkness is no matter of wonder. But ye to whom I have given light, and whom I have daily exhorted to repent,—shall ye be unpunished? How could this be? I should not then be the judge of the world." We now then perceive the real meaning of the Prophet: "Lo," he says, "the eyes of Jehovah are upon

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every sinful kingdom; I will destroy all the nations who have sinned from the face of the earth, though they have the pretence of ignorance for their sins; shall I not now, forsooth, destroy the house of Israel?" Here then the Prophet speaks ironically, *Except that I shall not destroy by destroying the house of Israel;* that is, "Do you wish me to be subservient to you, as though my hands were tied, that I could not take vengeance on you? what right have you to do this? and what can hinder me from punishing ingratitude so great and so shameful?"

He afterwards adds, *For, lo, I will command, &c.* The Prophet here confirms the former sentence; and hence I conclude that the second part of the preceding verse is ironically expressed; for if he had promised pardon to the Israelites, he would have gone on with the same subject; but, on the contrary, he proceeds in another direction, and says, that God would justly punish the Israelites; for the event would at length make it known, that among them not even a grain would be found, but that all would be like chaff or refuse: *Lo,* he says, *I will shake among the nations the Israelites, as corn is shaken in a sieve: a grain,* he says, *shall not fall on the earth;* as though he said, "Though I shall scatter the Israelites through various places, that they may be dispersed here and there, yet this exile shall ever be like a sieve: they now contend with me, when any grain has fallen. The event then shall show, that there is in them nothing but chaff and filth; for I will by sieving cleanse my whole floor, and nothing shall be found to remain on it." If one objects and says, that there were some godly persons in that nation, though very small in number. This I admit to be true: but the Prophet speaks here, as in many other places, of the whole nation; he refers not to individuals. It was then true, with regard to the body of the people of Israel, that there was not one among them who could be compared to grain, for all had become empty through their iniquities; and hence they necessarily disappeared in the sieve, and were like chaff or refuse.

But it must be observed, that God here cuts off the handle for evasion, for hypocrites ever contend with him; and although they cannot wholly clear themselves, they yet exten-

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uate their sins, and accuse God of too much severity. The Prophet then anticipates such objections, "I will command," he says, "and will shake the house of Israel as corn is shaken." It was a very hard lot, when the people were thus driven into different parts of the world; it was indeed a dreadful tearing. The Israelites might have complained that they were too severely treated; but God by this similitude obviates this calumny, "They are indeed scattered in their exile, yet they remain in a sieve; *I will shake them*, he says, *among the nations:* but not otherwise than corn when *shaken in a sieve:*" and it is allowed by the consent of all that corn ought to be cleansed. Though the greater part disappears, when the corn, threshed on the floor, is afterwards subjected to the fan; yet there is no one but sees that this is necessary and reasonable: no one complains that the chaff thus perishes. Why so? Because it is useless. God then shows that he is not cruel, nor exceeds moderation, though he may scatter his people through the remote regions of the earth, for he ever keeps them in a sieve.

He afterwards adds, *And fall shall not a grain on the earth.* They translate צרור, *tsarur*, a stone, but צרר, *tsarer*, is to tie, and hence this word means what is collected, or, binding, as when the children of Jacob had their money tied in their sacks, they said, 'Behold my binding;' so also now it is taken for the solid grain. God then intimates that he would not be so rigid as not to moderate his punishment, so as to spare the innocent. I have already said, that though there would be still a remnant among the people, yet what the Prophet says is true as to the whole body; for it had nothing either sound or pure. But this objection might be made: It is certain that many faithful worshippers of God were taken away into exile with the wicked; they then fell on the earth as useless chaff or refuse; but God denies that this would be the case. To this I answer, that though the Lord involves his servants with the ungodly when he executes temporal punishment, he is yet ever propitious to them; and it is certain, that however hardly they may be dealt with, they yet do not expostulate; they groan, indeed, but at the

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same time they acknowledge that they are mercifully treated by the Lord.

But another thing must also be remembered,—that though the Lord would not have dealt so severely with his people, had they been like the few who were good, yet not one of them was without some fault. Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, were indeed like angels among men; and it was indeed a miracle, that they stood upright in the midst of so much impiety; they were yet led into captivity. When they approached God, they could not object, that they were punished beyond what they deserved. Worthy, indeed, was Jeremiah of heavier punishment; and so was Daniel, though an example of the highest and even of angelic integrity. God then could have cast them away as refuse: it is nevertheless certain that they were wheat; and the Lord shook them in the sieve like the chaff, yet so as ever to keep them gathered under his protection; but at the same time in a hidden manner: as, for instance, the wheat on the floor is beaten together with the chaff; this is common to both; no difference can be observed in the threshing. True is this, and the case is the same when the wheat is being winnowed. When therefore the wheat is gathered, it is, together with the chaff, to be sifted by the fan, without any difference; but the wheat remains. So also it happened to the pious worshippers of God; the Lord kept them collected in the sieve. But here he speaks of the people in general; and he says that the whole people were like refuse and filth, and that they vanished, because there was no solidity in them, no use to be made of them, so that no one remained in the sieve. That God then preserved his servants, was an instance of his wonderful working. But the denunciation of punishment, here spoken of, belonged to the outward dealings of God. As then the people were like refuse or chaff shaken and driven to various places, this happened to them justly, because nothing solid was found in them. It now follows—

10. All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say,

10. Gladio morientur omnes scelerati populi mei, qui dicunt, Non

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The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.	accedet et non antevertet proper nos malum.

Amos goes on with the same subject,—that God without any measure of cruelty would execute extreme vengeance on a reprobate people: *Die*, he says, *by the sword shall all the wicked of my people.* In naming the wicked of the people, he meant no doubt to include the whole people; though if any one thinks that the elect are by implication excepted, who were mixed with the ungodly, I do not object: this is probable; but yet the Prophet speaks here of the people generally. He says that the wicked of the people would perish by the sword: for it was not the sin of a few that Amos here refers to, but the sin which prevailed among the whole nation. Then all the wicked of my people shall die by the sword. He points out what sort of people they were, or at least he mentions the chief mark by which their impiety might be discovered,—they obstinately despised all the judgments of God, *They say, It will not draw near, nor lay hold, on our account, the evil.*

Security then, which of itself ever generates a contempt of God, is here mentioned as the principal mark of impiety. And doubtless the vices of men reach a point that is past hope, when they are touched neither by fear nor shame, but expect God's judgments without any concern or anxiety. Since then they thus drove far away from themselves all threatenings, while at the same time they were ill at ease with themselves, and as it were burying themselves in deep caverns, and seeking false peace to their consciences, they were in a torpor, or rather stupor, incapable of any remedy. It is, therefore, no wonder that the Prophet lays down here this mark of security, when he is showing that there was no remnant of a sound mind in this people. Die then shall all the wicked by the sword, even those who say, It will not draw near, nor anticipate us, on our account, the evil: for we cannot explain the word הקדים, *ekodim*, in any other way than by referring it to the threatenings. For the Prophets, we know, commonly declared that the day of the Lord was at hand, that his hand was already armed, that it had already seized the sword. As then the Prophets, in order to smite

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despisers with fear, were wont to threaten a near punishment; so the Prophet does here; wishing to expose the impious stupor of the people, he says, "You think that there will not be such haste as is foretold to you by the Prophets; but this sheer perverseness will be the cause of your ruin."

As to the expression, It will not come *on our account*, from a regard to us, it deserves to be noticed. Though hypocrites confess in general, that they cannot escape the hand of God, yet they still separate themselves from the common class, as if they are secured by some peculiar privilege. They therefore set up something in opposition to God, that they may not be blended with others. This folly the Prophet indirectly condemns by saying, that hypocrites are in a quiet and tranquil state, because they think that there will be to them no evil in common with the rest, as also they say in Isa. xxviii. 15, 'The scourge, if it passes, will not yet reach us.' We now then see what the Prophet has hitherto taught, and the meaning of these four verses which we have just explained. Now follows the promise—

11. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old.	11. In die illa erigam tabernaculum David, quod cecidit, et sepiam rupturas ejus, et subversiones ejus erigam, et ædificabo illud, sicuti diebus antiquis (seculi, *ad verbum.*)

Here now the Prophet begins to set forth the consolation, which alone could support the minds of the godly under afflictions so severe. Threatenings alone might have cast the strongest into despair; but the event itself must have overwhelmed whatever hope there might have been. Hence the Prophet now applies comfort by saying, that God would punish the sins of the people of Israel in such a way as to remember still his own promise. We know, that whenever the Prophets designed to give some hope to a distressed people, they set forth the Messiah, for in him all the promises of God, as Paul says, are Yea and Amen, (2 Cor. i. 20:) and there was no other remedy for the dispersion than for God to gather all the scattered members under one head. Hence, when the head is taken away, the Church has no head; espe-

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cially when it is scattered and torn, as was the case after the time of Amos. It is no wonder then that the Prophets, after having prophesied of the destruction of the people, such as happened after the two kingdoms were abolished, should recall the minds of the faithful to the Messiah; for except God had gathered the Church under one head, there would have been no hope. This is, therefore, the order which Amos now observes.

In that day, he says, *will I raise up the tabernacle of David:* as though he had said, that the only hope would be, when the Redeemer, who had been promised, would appear. This is the import of the whole. After having shown then that the people had no hope from themselves, for God had tried all means, but in vain, and after having denounced their final ruin, he now subjoins, "The Lord will yet have mercy on his people, for he will remember his covenant." How will this be? "The Redeemer shall come." We now then understand the design of the Prophet and the meaning of the verse.

But when he speaks of the tabernacle of David, he refers, I doubt not, to the decayed state of things; for a tabernacle does not comport with royal dignity. It is the same as though Amos had said, "Though the house of David is destitute of all excellency, and is like a mean cottage, yet the Lord will perform what he has promised; he will raise up again his kingdom, and restore to him all the power which has been lost." The Prophet then had regard to that intervening time, when the house of David was deprived of all splendour and entirely thrown down. I will then raise up the tabernacle of David: he might have said the tabernacle of Jesse; but he seems to have designedly mentioned the name of David, that he might the more fully strengthen the minds of the godly in their dreadful desolation, so that they might with more alacrity flee to the promise: for the name of Jesse was more remote. As then the name of David was in repute, and as this oracle, 'Of the fruit of thy loins I will set on thy throne,' (Ps. cxxxii. 11,) was commonly known, the Prophet brings forward here the house of David, in order that the faithful might remember that God had not in vain made a covenant with David: *The tabernacle* then *of David will I then raise up,*

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and will fence in its breaches, and its ruins will I raise up; and I will build *it as in the days of old.* Thus the Prophet intimates that not only the throne of David would be overthrown, but also that nothing would remain entire in his mean booth, for it would decay into ruins, and all things would be subverted. In short, he intimates that mournful devastation would happen to the whole family of David. He speaks, as it is well understood, metaphorically of the tabernacle: but the sense is clear, and that is, that God would restore the royal dignity, as in former times, to the throne of David.

This is a remarkable prediction, and deserves to be carefully weighed by us. It is certain that the Prophet here refers to the advent of Christ; and of this there is no dispute, for even the Jews are of this opinion, at least the more moderate of them. There are indeed those of a shameless front, who pervert all Scripture without any distinction: these and their barking we may pass by. It is however agreed that this passage of the Prophet cannot be otherwise explained than of the Messiah: for the restitution of David's family was not to be expected before his time; and this may easily be learnt from the testimonies of other Prophets. As then the Prophet here declares, that a Redeemer would come, who would renew the whole state of the kingdom, we see that the faith of the Fathers was ever fixed on Christ; for in the whole world it is he alone who has reconciled us to God: so also, the fallen Church could not have been restored otherwise than under one head, as we have already often stated. If then at this day we desire to raise up our minds to God, Christ must immediately become a Mediator between us; for when he is taken away, despair will ever overwhelm us, nor can we attain any sure hope. We may indeed be raised up by some wind or another; but our empty confidence will shortly come to nothing, except we have a confidence founded on Christ alone. This is one thing.

We must secondly observe, that the interruption, when God overthrew the kingdom, I mean, the kingdom of Judah, is not inconsistent with the prediction of Jacob and other similar predictions. Jacob indeed had said, 'Taken away shall not be the sceptre from Judah, nor a lawgiver from his

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bosom, or from his feet, until he shall come, the Shiloh,' (Gen. xlix. 10.) Afterwards followed this memorable promise, 'Sit of thy progeny on thy throne shall he, who shall call me his Father, and in return I will call him my Son, and his throne shall perpetually remain,' (Ps. cxxxii. 11, 12.) Here is promised the eternity of the kingdom; and yet we see that this kingdom was diminished under Rehoboam, we see that it was distressed with many evils through its whole progress, and at length it was miserably destroyed, and almost extinguished; nay, it had hardly the name of a kingdom, it had no splendour, no throne, no dignity, no sceptre, no crown. It then follows, that there seems to be an inconsistency between these events and the promises of God. But the Prophets easily reconcile these apparent contrarieties; for they say, that for a time there would be no kingdom, or at least that it would be disturbed by many calamities, so that there would appear no outward form of a kingdom, and no visible glory. As then they say this, and at the same time add, that there would come a restoration, that God would establish this kingdom by the power of his Christ,—as then the Prophets say this, they show that its perpetuity would really appear and be exhibited in Christ. Though then the kingdom had for some time fallen, this does not militate against the other predictions. This then is the right view of the subject: for Christ at length appeared, on whose head rests the true diadem or crown, and who has been elected by God, and is the legitimate king, and who, having risen from the dead, reigns, and now sits at the Father's right hand, and his throne shall not fail to the end of the world; nay, the world shall be renovated, and Christ's kingdom shall continue, though in another form, after the resurrection, as Paul shows to us; and yet Christ shall be really a king for ever.

And the Prophet, by saying, *as in ancient days*, confirms this truth, that the dignity of the kingdom would not continue uniform, but that the restoration would yet be such as to make it clearly evident, that God had not in vain promised an eternal kingdom to David. Flourish then shall the kingdom of David for ever. But this has not been the case; for when the people returned from exile, Zerobabel, it is true, and

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also many others, obtained kingly power; yet what was it but precarious? They became even tributaries to the kings of the Persians and of the Medes. It then follows, that the kingdom of Israel never flourished, nor had there existed among the people anything but a limited power; we must, therefore, necessarily come to Christ and his kingdom. We hence see that the words of the Prophet cannot be otherwise understood than of Christ. It follows—

12. That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this. [1]

12. Ut possideant reliquias Edom et omnes gentes, super quas (*alii vertunt*, super quos) invocatum est nomen meum, dicit Jehova hoc faciens.

By these words the Prophet shows that the kingdom under Christ would be more renowned and larger than it had ever been under David. Since then the kingdom had been greatest in dignity, and wealth, and power, in the age of David, the Prophet here says, that its borders would be enlarged; for then he says, *Possess shall the Israelites the remnants of Edom.* He speaks here in common of the Israelites and of the Jews, as before, at the beginning of the last chapter, he threatened both. But we now apprehend what he means,—that Edom shall come under the yoke.

And it is sufficiently evident why he mentions here especially the Idumeans, and that is, because they had been most inveterate enemies; and vicinity gave them greater opportunity for doing harm. As then the Idumeans harassed the miserable Jews, and gave them no respite, this is the reason why the

[1] עשה זאת, "who *will* do these things." It appears that זאת is a pronoun which is plural as well as singular: and the Welsh *hyn* is exactly the same; it will admit thing or things to be added to it—*y peth hyn*—*y pethan hyn*. When it is put by itself, *hyn*, it conveys the idea of one particular thing, or of several things, according to the context.

The relative pronoun, אשר, who, whom, is of the same character; it is both singular and plural, as *whom* also is in the English language, and *sawl* in Welsh.

עשה is considered a participle, and the participle in Hebrew may often be rendered as a personal noun, and in this instance *the doer*. It is the ὁ ποιων of the Greek. But if the verbal form be retained, the auxiliary verb must be in the same tense with the leading verb in the context, "who *will* do these things."—*Ed.*

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Prophet says that they would come under the power of l elect people. He afterwards adds, that all nations wou come also to the Jews. He speaks first of the Idumeans, b he also adds all other nations. I cannot finish to-day.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we see everywhere so many evid tokens of thy displeasure, and more grievous ones are impen ing, if we indeed duly consider how grievously we have pr voked thy wrath, and how wickedly also the whole world this day rages against thee, and at the same time abuses t many and excellent benefits,—O grant, that we may ev remember thy covenant, and entertain a perpetual confidence thy only-begotten Son, that whenever it may please thee to s us, thou mayest keep us in safety, until we come, not into a earthly storehouse, but into thy celestial kingdom, where may become partakers of that glory which thy Son h obtained for us, who has once for all redeemed us, that we m ever remain under his guardianship and protection. Amen

Lecture Sixty-ninth.

In yesterday's Lecture, we could not finish the verse which Amos says, that the Idumeans and other nations wou come under the power of the people of God. As to tl first clause there is no ambiguity, but the latter admi of two meanings. Some take its sense to be this, "Oth nations on whom my name is called:" and others refer th to the children of Abraham in this way, "That possess tl remnants of Edom and all nations they may, upon whom," &c that is, that they on whom my name is called, even tl descendants of Abraham, may possess the Idumeans and a other nations. If we choose the reference to be made to tl chosen people, the order of the words seems to be somewh broken; and yet this sense is very suitable,—that posse their enemies the faithful may, on whom my name is callec for the reason appears to be here expressed by the Prophe why he promised a large kingdom to the Israelites, and th is, because they were enrolled in God's name, the Lord owne

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them as his people, inasmuch as he had chosen and adopted them in the person of their father Abraham. But if the other view be more approved, then the particle אשר, *asher*, is not, as I think, a pronoun relative, but an adverb expressing a cause, "That they may possess the remnants of Edom and all nations, for my name shall have been, or shall be, called on them:" [1] for who can have possession of this right or title but those who, having been aliens, shall pass over into the family of Abraham? Israel is indeed said to possess whatever comes from another quarter, and is incorporated into the body of the Church.

But on this point I will not contend; for this main thing is evident to us,—that the extension of the kingdom under Christ is here promised, as though he had said, that the Jews were included within narrow bounds, even when the kingdom of David especially flourished, but that God would under Christ extend their borders, and cause them to rule far and wide. What it is to call God's name on a people, we have elsewhere stated. Let us now go on with the context.

13. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.

13. Ecce dies veniunt, dicit Jehova, et occurret arator messori, et calcator uvarum efferenti semen; et stillabunt montes dulcem liquorem, et omnes colles liquefient (*nempe ut lacte diffluant.*)

Here the Prophet describes the felicity which shall be

[1] This sentence is an instance, common in Hebrew, of the use of two pronouns,—a relative and a personal pronoun; to the latter of which is prefixed the preposition. It has already been noticed, that in Welsh the same idiom exists; in that language this line is rendered word for word like the Hebrew: and the true rendering is no doubt that which is mentioned last by Calvin. The Hebrew literally is this,—

Whom shall be called my name upon them.

The same is the line in Welsh, without any change even in the order of the words,—

Y rhai y gelwir vy enw arnynt.

Another peculiarity is, that the preposition is prefixed and *joined to* the personal pronoun in Welsh as well as in Hebrew; and a third is, that the relative *y rhai* (the whom) in Welsh, like אשר in Hebrew, admits of no case. It is the same when a nominative to a verb, or when an accusative governed by it.—*Ed.*

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under the reign of Christ: and we know that whenever the Prophets set forth promises of a happy and prosperous state to God's people, they adopt metaphorical expressions, and say, that abundance of all good things shall flow, that there shall be the most fruitful produce, that provisions shall be bountifully supplied; for they accommodated their mode of speaking to the notions of that ancient people; it is therefore no wonder, if they sometimes speak to them as to children. At the same time, the Spirit under these figurative expressions declares, that the kingdom of Christ shall in every way be happy and blessed, or that the Church of God, which means the same thing, shall be blessed, when Christ shall begin to reign.

Hence he says, *Coming are the days, saith Jehovah, and the plowman shall draw nigh*, or meet, *the reaper*. The Prophet no doubt refers to the blessing mentioned by Moses in Lev. xxvi.: for the Prophets borrowed thence their mode of speaking, to add more credit and authority to what they taught. And Moses uses nearly the same words,—that the vintage shall meet the harvest, and also that sowing shall meet the plowing: and this is the case, when God supplies abundance of corn and wine, and when the season is pleasant and favourable. We then see what the Prophet means, that is, that God would so bless his people, that he would suffer no lack of good things.

The plowman then *shall come nigh the reaper; and the treader of grapes, the bearer of seed.* When they shall finish the harvest, they shall begin to plow, for the season will be most favourable; and then when they shall complete their vintage, they shall sow. Thus the fruitfulness, as I have said, of all produce is mentioned.

The Prophet now speaks in a hyperbolical language, and says, *Mountains shall drop sweetness, and all the hills shall melt*, that is, milk shall flow down. We indeed know that this has never happened; but this manner of speaking is common and often occurs in Scripture. The sum of the whole is, that there will be no common or ordinary abundance of blessings, but what will exceed belief, and even the course of nature, as the very mountains shall as it were flow down. It now follows—

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14. And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit *them;* and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens and eat the fruit of them.

14. Et reducam captivitatem populi mei Israel; et ædificabunt urbes dirutas, et habitabunt illic; plantabunt vites, et bibunt vinum earum; facient hortos, et comedent fructus ipsorum.

As the prophecy we have noticed was one difficult to be believed, especially when the people were led away into exile, the Prophet comes to the help of this lack of faith, and shows that this would be no hinderance to God to lead his people to the felicity of which he speaks. These things seem indeed to be quite contrary, the one to the other,—that the people, spoiled of all dignity, should be driven to a far country to live in miserable exile, and that they should also be scattered into various parts and oppressed by base tyranny;—and that at the same time a most flourishing condition should be promised them, and that such an extension of their kingdom should be promised them, as had never been previously witnessed. Lest then their present calamities should fill their minds with fear and bind them fast in despair, he says that the Israelites shall return from exile, not indeed all; but as we have already seen, this promise is addressed to the elect alone: at the same time he speaks here simply of the people. But this prophecy is connected with other prophecies: it ought not therefore to be extended except to that remnant seed, of whom we have before taken notice.

Restore then *will I the captivity of my people Israel;* and then, *They shall build wasted cities and dwell there; they shall plant vineyards, and their wine shall they drink; they shall make gardens, and shall eat their fruit.* He reminds the people here of the blessings mentioned in the Law. They must indeed have known that the hand of the Lord was opposed to them in their exile. Hence the Prophet now shows, that as soon as the Lord would again begin to be propitious to them, there would be a new state of things; for when God shows his smiling countenance, prosperity follows, and a blessed success in all things. This then is what the Prophet now intends to show, that the miserable exiles might not faint in despair, when the Lord chastised them. It follows at last—

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15. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.

15. Et plantabo eos super terram suam, (in terra sua,) et non evellentur amplius à terra sua, quam dedi illis, inquit Jehova Deus tuus.

The Prophet further mentions here a quiet dwelling in the land, for it was not enough for the people to be restored to their country, except they lived there in safety and quietness; for they might soon afterwards have been removed again. It would have been better for them to pine away in exile, than to be restored for the sake, as it were, of sporting with them, and in a short time to be again conquered by their enemies, and to be led away into another country. Therefore the Prophet says, that the people, when restored, would be in a state of tranquillity.

And he uses a most suitable comparison, when he says, *I will plant them in their own land, nor shall they be pulled up any more:* for how can we have a settled place to dwell in, except the Lord locates us somewhere? We are indeed as it were flitting beings on the earth, and we may at any moment be tossed here and there as the chaff. We have therefore no settled dwelling, except as far as we are planted by the hand of God, or as far as God assigns to us a certain habitation, and is pleased to make us rest in quietness. This is what the Prophet means by saying, *I will plant them in their own land, nor shall they any more be pulled up.* How so? Because he says, *I have given to them the land.* He had indeed given it to them before, but he suffered them to be pulled up when they had polluted the land. But now God declares that his grace would outweigh the sins of the people; as though he said, "However unworthy the people are who dwell in this land, my gift will yet be effectual: for I will not regard what they deserve at my hands, but as I have given them this land, they shall obtain it." We now apprehend the meaning of the Prophet.

Now, if we look on what afterwards happened, it may appear that this prophecy has never been fulfilled. The Jews indeed returned to their own country, but it was only a small number: and besides, it was so far from being the case, that they ruled over neighbouring nations, that they became on

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the contrary tributaries to them: and further still, the limits of their rule were ever narrow, even when they were able to shake off the yoke. In what sense then has God promised what we have just explained? We see this when we come to Christ; for it will then be evident that nothing has been in vain foretold: though the Jews have not ruled as to the outward appearance, yet the kingdom of God was then propagated among all nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun; and then, as we have said in other places, the Jews reigned.

Further, what is here said of the abundance of corn and wine, must be explained with reference to the nature of Christ's kingdom. As then the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, it is enough for us, that it abounds in spiritual blessings: and the Jews, whom God reserved for himself as a remnant, were satisfied with this spiritual abundance.

If any one objects and says, that the Prophet does not speak here allegorically; the answer is ready at hand, even this,—that it is a manner of speaking everywhere found in Scripture, that a happy state is painted as it were before our eyes by setting before us the conveniences of the present life and earthly blessings: this may especially be observed in the Prophets, for they accommodated their style, as we have already stated, to the capacities of a rude and weak people. But as this subject has been discussed elsewhere more at large, I only touch on it now as in passing and lightly. Now follows the Prophecy of Obadiah, who is commonly called Abdiah.[1]

[1] There is no Prayer here, for the Lecture is not completed: it includes a portion of the Book of Obadiah.—*Ed.*

END OF THE COMMENTARIES ON AMOS.

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THE

COMMENTARIES OF JOHN CALVIN

ON THE

PROPHET OBADIAH.

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CALVIN'S PREFACE TO OBADIAH.

THIS PROPHECY does not consist of many oracles, nor of many sermons, as other prophecies; but it only denounces on the Idumeans a near destruction, and then promises a restoration to the chosen people of God. But it threatens the Idumeans for the sake of administering consolation to the chosen people; for it was a grievous and hard trial for the children of Jacob, an elect people, to see the posterity of Esau, who had been rejected by God, flourishing both in wealth and power.

As then the children of Israel were miserable in comparison with their own kindred, the adoption of God might have appeared worthless; and this was in great measure the reason why the Israelites preferred the lot of others to their own; and thus envy and depraved emulation, as it happens for the most part, vitiated their minds: for adversity produces sorrow and weariness, and if the prosperity of others is observed by us, our sorrow is enhanced and our weariness is increased. When therefore the Israelites saw the Idumeans living at ease and beyond the reach of danger, and when they also saw them in the enjoyment of every abundance, while they themselves were exposed as a prey to their enemies, and were continually expecting new calamities, it could not have been, but that their faith must have utterly failed, or at least become much weakened. For this reason the Prophet here shows, that though the Idumeans now lived happily, yet in a short time they would be destroyed, for they were hated by God; and he

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shows that this would be the case, as we shall see from the contents of this Book, for the sake of the chosen people.

We now then perceive the design of the Prophet: as adversity might have weakened the Israelites, and even utterly broken them down, the Prophet here applies comfort and props up their dejected minds, for the Lord would shortly look on them and take due vengeance on their enemies.

And the reason why this prophecy is levelled against the Idumeans only is this,—that they, as we know, raged more cruelly than any others against the Israelites: for it is not said without a cause in Ps. cxxxvii. 7, 'Remember the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem, who said, Make bare, make bare even to the very foundations.' There were also others, no doubt, who were not friends to the Israelites, and had conspired with their enemies: but the Prophet there shows, that there was a furious hatred entertained by the Idumeans, for they acted as fans to excite the cruel rage of enemies.

Now at what time OBADIAH prophesied, it does not appear,[1] except that it is probable that this prophecy was announced, when the Idumeans rose up against the Israelites and distressed them by many annoyances: for they seem to be mistaken who think that OBADIAH lived before the time of Isaiah. It appears that Jeremiah (ch. xlix.) and this Prophet made use of the same thoughts and nearly of the same words, as we shall hereafter see. The Holy Spirit could, no doubt, have expressed the same things in different words; but he was pleased to join together these two testimonies, that they might obtain more credit.[2] I know not whether Obadiah and

[1] *Newcome* supposes that he prophesied between the taking of Jerusalem in 587 before Christ and the destruction of Idumea, a few years later, by Nebuchadnezzar. Usher, as quoted by Newcome, places the destruction of Jerusalem in 588 B.C., and the siege of Tyre by the Babylonians three years later, that is, in 585; and it was during this siege, which lasted thirteen years, that the *Idumeans*, as well as the Sidonians, the Moabites, and the Ammonites, were subdued by the Babylonian power: so that the threatenings contained in this prophecy were soon executed.—*Ed.*

[2] Expositors are divided in their opinions as to the priority of the two Prophets, and consequently as to whom of the two was the copyist. As the time cannot be ascertained, our only mode of ascertaining this, are the passages themselves as given by each. It is said that Jeremiah has not presented them in so perfect a form as Obadiah, and that in the latter

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Jeremiah were contemporaries, and on this subject we need not bestow much labour. It is sufficient for us to know, that this prophecy was added to other prophecies, that the Israelites might feel assured, that though their kindred the Idumeans might prosper for a time, yet they could not escape the hand of God, but would shortly be constrained to give an account of their cruelty, inasmuch as they had without cause been all in a flame against the distressed and afflicted people of God.

Now our Prophet shows at the end that God would become the avenger of this cruelty, which the Idumeans had exercised; for though he chastised his own people, he did not yet forget his gratuitous covenant. Let us now come to the words.

they appear as the naturally connected parts of his subject, and accordant in style and character with the rest of the prophecy. But the matter is of no great importance, and to discuss it can bring no benefit.—*Ed.*

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COMMENTARIES

ON

THE PROPHET OBADIAH.

1. The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord God concerning Edom,[1] We have heard a rumour from the Lord, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle.

1. Visio Obadiæ. Sic Dominus Jehova contra Edom, Rumorem audivimus à Jehova, et legatus ad gentes missus est, Surgite et surgamus contra eam ad prœlium.

OBADIAH'S preface is, that he brought nothing human, but only declared the vision presented to him from above. We indeed know that it was God alone that was ever to be heard in the Church, as even now he demands to be heard: but yet he sent his prophets, as afterwards the apostles; yea, as he sent his only begotten Son, whom he has set over us to be

[1] The Septuagint renders the words, "*to* Edom"—Ταδε λεγει κυριος ὁ Θεὸς τῃ Ἰδουμαίᾳ—"Thus saith the Lord God to Idumea;" which is an exact rendering of the original, for it is, לאדום—"to Edom." It was a message from God *to* that people. May we not hence conclude that this prophecy was *sent to* them by Obadiah? They are often personally addressed: and this seems to favour such a supposition. It is indeed true that ל prefixed to a word after the verb, to say or to speak, is often rendered, *of*, or, *concerning*; but it is also rendered by, *to*, meaning that the address is made *to* the person.—*Ed.*

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our only and sovereign Teacher. Obadiah then by saying that it was a vision, said the same, as though he declared, that he did not presumptuously bring forward his own dreams, or what he conjectured, or discovered by human reason, but that he adduced only a celestial oracle: for חזון, *chezun*, as we have observed in other places, was a vision, by which God revealed himself to his Prophets.

He then adds, *Thus saith Jehovah.* Here is a fuller expression of the same declaration. We thus see that the Prophet, in order that the doctrine he brought forward might not be suspected, made God the author; for what faith can be put in men, whom we know to be vain and false, except as far as they are ruled by the Spirit of God and sent by Him? Seeing then that the Prophet so carefully teaches us, that what he declared was delivered to him by God, we may hence learn what I have lately referred to,—that the Prophets formerly so spoke, that God alone might be heard among the people.

He says afterwards, *A rumour have we heard.* Some render it, a word, or a doctrine. שמועה, *shimuoe*, is properly a hearing, and is derived from the verb the Prophet subjoins. *A hearing* then *have we heard;* so it is translated literally. But some think that what was taught is pointed out, as though he said, "The Lord has revealed this to me and to other Prophets;" according to what Isaiah says, ch. liii., 'Who hath believed our hearing?' It is the same word, and he speaks of God's word or doctrine. But it is probable that he refers here to those tumultuous rumours, which commonly precede wars and calamities. *We have* then *heard a rumour.* The verb in Jeremiah is not in the plural number, שמענו, *shimonu*, but שמועה שמעתי, *shimoti shimuoe*, 'I have heard,' says Jeremiah, 'a hearing.' But our Prophet uses the plural number, 'We have heard a hearing.' The sense however is the same; for Jeremiah says that he had heard rumours; and the Prophet here adds others to himself, as though he said, "This rumour is spread abroad, but it is from the Lord: it is certain that this rumour has been heard even by the profane and the despisers of God." But the Prophet shows that wars are not stirred up at random, but by the secret influence of God; as though he said, "When a tumult arises,

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let us not think that its beginning is from the earth, but God himself is the mover." We now then apprehend the design of the Prophet: though he speaks of the rumour of wars, he yet shows that chance or accident does not rule in such commotions, but the hidden influence (*instinctum*) of God.

We have heard, he says, *from Jehovah, and a messenger*, or, an ambassador, *to the nations has been sent*,[1] *Arise ye, and we will arise against her to battle.* In Jeremiah, it is, 'Assemble ye, come and arise against her to battle.' The Prophet here shows, I have no doubt, whence the rumour came, which he had just mentioned; for they were now indeed stirring up one another to destroy that land. If any one had formed a judgment according to human wisdom, he would have said that the Assyrians were the cause why war was brought on the Idumeans, because they had found them either inconstant or even perfidious, or because they had feigned a pretence when there was no just reason for making war. But the Prophet here raises his mind upward, and acknowledges God to be the mover of this war, because he intended to punish the cruelty of that people, which they had exercised toward their own kindred, the Israelites; and at the same time he encourages others also, that they might understand that it was altogether directed by the hidden counsel of God, that the Assyrians, from being friends, became of a sudden enemies, that a war was all in a flame against the Idumeans at a time when they were at ease, without any fear, without any apprehension of danger. It follows—

2. Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised.	2. Ecce parvum posui te inter gentes, contemptus tu valdè.
3. The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation *is*	3. Superbia cordis tui decepit te, qui habitas in scissuras petræ (*vel*, rupis;) excelsa habitatio ejus,

[1] Or the two lines may be thus rendered,—

A rumour have we heard from Jehovah,
And a messenger to the nations hath he sent.

The verb, to send, is here active; and so it is rendered in the Septuagint. It is indeed passive in the corresponding passage in Jeremiah; but there are several other instances of variety in the expressions used by the two Prophets, though there be in sense a material agreement.—*Ed.*

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high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?

4. Though thou exalt *thyself* as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.

dicens in corde suo, Quis detrahet me in terram?

4. Si exaltaveris quasi aquila, etsi inter nubes posueris nidum suum, inde ego detraham te, dicit Jehova.

Jeremiah uses nearly the same words; but the sense of the expression is ambiguous, when he says, 'Lo, little have I set thee.' To me it appears probable, that the Prophet reproves the Idumeans, because they became arrogant, as it were, against the will of God, and in opposition to it, when, at the same time, they were confined to the narrow passes of mountains. It is said elsewhere, (Mal. i. 2,) 'Jacob and Esau, were they not brethren?' "But I have given to you the inheritance promised to your father Abraham; I have transferred the Idumeans to mount Seir." Now it is less bearable, if any one be elated with pride, when his condition is not so honourable. I therefore think that the Idumeans are here condemned because they vaunted so much, and arrogated to themselves more than what was right, when they yet were contemptible, when their condition was mean and obscure, for they dwelt on mount Seir. But others think that the punishment, which was impending over them, is here denounced, *Lo, little have I made thee among the nations*, and Jeremiah says, *and contemptible among men;* he omits the two words, *thou* and *exceedingly;* he says only, *and contemptible among men.* But as to the substance, there is hardly any difference. If then we understand that that nation was proud without reason, the sense is evident, that is, that they, like the giants, carried on war against God, that they vaunted themselves, though confined to the narrow passes of mountains. Though I leave to others their own free opinion, I am yet inclined to the former view, while the latter has been adopted nearly by the consent of all; and that is, that God was resolved forcibly to constrain to order those ferocious men, who, for no reason, and even in opposition to nature, were become insolent. But if a different interpretation be more approved, we may say, that the Prophet begins with a threatening, and then subjoins a reason why God determined to diminish and even to destroy them: for

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though they dwelt on mountains, it was yet a fertile region; and further, they had gathered in course of long time much wealth, when they attained security, when no enemy disturbed them. This then is the reasoning, *Lo, I have made thee small and contemptible in the mountains,*—and why? *because the pride of thy heart has deceived thee;* and Jeremiah adds, *error,*[1] though some render תִּפְלַצְתְּךָ, *taphlatsatac, image;* but this seems not appropriate. Jeremiah then, I doubt not, mentions terror in the first place; for it almost ever happens, that the proud strike others with fear: such then were the Idumeans.

Now if we follow the first meaning I explained, the two verses may be read as connected, *Lo, I have made thee small and contemptible among the nations;*[2] but *the pride of thy heart hath deceived thee;* some render it, hath raised thee up, deriving it from נָשָׂא, *nusha:* but they read שׂ, *shin,* pointed on the left side; for if נָשָׂא, *nusha,* has the point in the branch of the שׂ, *shin,* on the right hand, it means to deceive, but if on the left, it signifies to raise up. Then they give this translation, "The pride of thine heart hath raised thee up:" but we clearly learn from Jeremiah, that it ought, as almost all

[1] *Blayney,* for very satisfactory reasons, transfers this word to the preceding verse, and then the passage will be almost literally the same with this of Obadiah. The 15th, and the beginning of the 16th in Jer. xlix., may be thus rendered,—

15. For, behold, small have I made thee among the nations,
Contemptible among the men of thy terror,
(that is, such as thou didst fear.)
16. Deceived thee has the pride of thy heart; &c.—*Ed.*

[2] It is evidently of the past, and not of the future, that this verse speaks. The corresponding passage in Jeremiah is, in our version, rendered in the future tense, but *Blayney* renders it, as it is, in the past tense. Our version here adopts the past tense in the first line, "I have made,' &c., and the present in the second, "Thou *art,*" &c., contrary to the rule, that when the auxiliary verb is not expressed in the original, the tense of the verbs expressed is to be observed. The two lines should therefore be thus translated,—

Behold, small have I made thee among the nations;
Despised *wert* thou exceedingly.

The reference is, no doubt, as Calvin says, to the poor inheritance assigned to the Edomites, and to the low station they occupied among other nations; and hence their pride and insolence appeared more evident and unreasonable.—*Ed.*

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interpreters agree, to be rendered thus, "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee:" for he says not השיאך, *eshiac*, but השיא אותך, *eshia autca*, that is, it was to thee the cause of error and of madness. Of the sense then of this verb there can be no doubt.

The Prophet now laughs to scorn the Idumeans, because they relied on their own fortresses, and thought themselves, according to the common saying, to be beyond the reach of darts; and hence they petulantly insulted the Israelites and despised God himself. The Prophet therefore says, that the Idumeans in vain felicitated themselves, for he shows that all they promised to themselves were mere delusions. The import of what is said then is, "Whence is this your security, that ye think that enemies can do you no harm? Yea, ye despise God as well as men; whence is this haughtiness? whence also is the great confidence with which ye are puffed up? Verily, it comes only from mere delusion, *The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee.*"

And yet there was not wanting a reason why the Idumeans were thus insolent, as the Prophet also states: but he at the same time shows that they had deceived themselves; for God cared not for their fortresses; nay, he counted them as nothing. Thou *dwellest*, he says, (this is to be regarded as a concession,) *in the clefts of the stone;* some read, "between the windings of the rock;"[1] though others think סלע, *Salo*, to be the name of a city. But though I should allow that the Prophet alludes to the name of a city, I yet do not see how can that stand which they hold; for clefts comport not with a city situated on a plain, though within the ranges of mountains. I do not then doubt but that סלע, *Salo*, here means mount Seir. As then the Idumeans had fortresses amidst rocks, they thought that all enemies could easily be kept out.

And hence it follows, *The height is his habitation*, that is, he dwells in lofty places; and hence *he says in his heart, Who shall draw me down to the ground?* He afterwards subjoins what I have already stated,—that though their region was

[1] *Blayney* renders the same words in Jeremiah xlix. 16, "the encirclings of the rock:" but Parkhurst renders them "the cracks, or fissures of the rock."—*Ed.*

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exceedingly well fortified, yet the Idumeans were greatly deceived, and indulged themselves in vain delusions, *If thou shouldest raise up thy seat,* he says, *like the eagle,*—literally, 'If thou shouldest rise as the eagle,'—*and if thou shouldest among the clouds*[1] *set thy nest, I will thence draw thee down, saith Jehovah.* We now see that the Prophet did not without reason deride the confidence with which the Idumeans were inflated, by setting up their fortresses in opposition to God: for it is the greatest madness for men to rely on their own power and to despise God himself. At the same time he could as it were, easily dissipate by one blast every idea of defence or of power that is in us; but this subject will be more fully handled by us to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou seest us to be on every side at this day beset by so many enemies, even by those who constantly devise means to destroy us, while we are so very weak and feeble,—O grant, that we may learn to look up to thee, and that our trust may so recumb on thee, that however exposed we may be to all kinds of danger according to what appears to the flesh, we may not yet doubt but that thou art ever armed with sufficient power to terrify our enemies, so that we may quietly live even amidst all dangers, and never cease to call on thy name, as thou hast promised to be the sure and faithful defender of our safety in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Seventieth.

We observed in our yesterday's Lecture, that it nothing avails the ungodly, when they set up their fortresses against the judgment of God, as though they could escape safe from his hand; for as God has heaven and earth under his control, he can, whenever it pleases him, draw down all who now despise his power, and, therefore, deride his Prophets, or regard as nothing their threatenings. This passage then ought to be carefully noticed; for God declares that it is in

[1] Literally it is, "among the stars," בין כוכבים.—*Ed.*

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his power to draw down from the very clouds those who so raise themselves up, as to think themselves to be elevated above all dangers. The Prophet now says—

5. If thieves come to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the grapegatherers came to thee, would they not leave *some* grapes?	5. An fures venerunt ad te? an prædones nocturni? quomodo in silentium redactus es? (*vel*, quomodo consumptus es?) annon furati essent sufficientiam suam? an vindemiatores ad te venerunt? annon reliquissent racemos?

The Prophet shows in this verse that the calamity with which God was resolved to afflict the Idumeans would not be slight, for nothing would be left among them; and he amplifies what he says by a comparison. When one is plundered of his property by thieves, he grieves, that what he had acquired by much labour through life, has been in one moment taken from him: and when any one has spent labour and expense in cultivating his vineyard, and another takes away its fruit, he complains of his great misfortune, that he had lost his property and his labour in the cultivation of his vineyard, while another devours its fruit. But the Prophet intimates that God would not be content with such kind of punishment as to the Idumeans.

Hence he says, *Have night thieves or robbers come to thee?* They must doubtless have stolen, and have taken away what they thought sufficient for them; but now nothing shall be left to thee. In short, the Prophet intimates that the Assyrians would not be like thieves or night robbers, who stealthily and privately take away what comes to their hands; but he means, that the Idumeans would be so plundered, that their houses would be left wholly empty, and he declares that the Assyrians would thus spoil them like night thieves or robbers, who are wont to proceed with unbridled liberty; for none dares to resist them, or even to say a word against them. This plundering then will not be, says the Prophet, of an ordinary kind; but the enemies will make thee entirely empty.

The same is the object in view when he says, *Have vintagers come to thee?* To be sure, they commonly leave some

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clusters; but the Assyrians will leave, no, not one: they shall depart so laden with plunder, that thou shalt be left empty.

But all this, as we have reminded you, was said in order to alleviate or to mitigate the grief of the faithful, who then deemed themselves very miserable, as they were alone plundered by enemies; for they saw that their neighbours were dwelling in safety, and even becoming partakers of the spoil. Their condition therefore was very miserable and degraded. Hence the Prophet, that he might moderate this bitter grief, says, that the Idumeans would in no common way be plundered, for not a hair would be left them. This is the import of the passage.

But some regard the verb נדמיתה, *nudamite*, as signifying, "Thou art reduced to silence;" for the verb דום, *dum*, or דמה, *dame*, means to be silent: and they give this exposition, "How dost thou not endeavour at least to meet thine enemies?" for they take "to be silent" in the sense of being still, as דמה, *dame*, is often so taken in Scripture, *How* then *have they been silent?* but he speaks of the future in the past tense, as though God had already inflicted punishment on the Idumeans, that faith in the prediction might be made more certain: thou hast been reduced to silence, that is, how couldest thou remain quiet on seeing thine enemies plundering with so much violence—how then hast thou been reduced to silence? Others say, How hast thou been consumed? for דמה, *dame*, often means to destroy. But to this point belongs no great importance; for the Prophet means, that it could not be ascribed to chance, that enemies would destroy the whole land of Edom, for the cruel assault would by no means be of an ordinary kind: and then as the Idumeans thought that an entrance to their enemies was on every side closed up, as they inhabited the summits of mountains, according to what I have already said, and that they were most safe in their recesses and lofty rocks, the Prophet here sets it forth as a wonderful thing that God's judgment would yet reach them. Let us proceed—

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6. How are *the things* of Esau searched out! *how* are his hidden things sought up!	6. Quomodo quæsita sunt Esau, pervestigata abscondita ejus?

He confirms the former sentence,—that the Idumeans in vain trusted that their riches would be safe, because they had hidden and deep recesses. Even when a country is plundered by enemies, the conquerors dare not to come to places of danger; when there are narrow passes, they avoid them, for they think that there is there some evil design. Hence conquerors, fearing hidden places, plunder only those which are open, and always consider well whether their advance is safe: but Idumea, as we have said, had hidden recesses, for its rocks were almost inaccessible, and there were many conveniences there for hiding and concealing its riches. But the Prophet says, that all this would be useless: and that he might more effectually rouse them, he speaks with astonishment, as of something incredible. *How have been sought* the things of *Esau*, and *thoroughly searched his hidden places!* Who could have thought this? for they might have concealed their treasures in rocks and caverns, and thence repelled their enemies. But in vain would be all their attempts: how could this possibly be? Here then he awakens the minds of men, that they might acknowledge the judgment of God; and at the same time he laughs to scorn the vain confidence with which the Idumeans were inflated; and besides, he strengthens the minds of the godly, that they might not doubt but that God would perform what he declares, for he can indeed penetrate even to the lowest deep.

In short, the Prophet intimates that the faithful did not act wisely, if they measured God's vengeance, which was impending on the Idumeans, by their own understanding or by what usually happens; for the Lord would make a thorough search, so that no hiding-places would escape his sight; and then all their treasures would be exposed as a prey to their enemies. We hence learn, that as men in vain seek hiding-places for themselves that they may be safe from dangers; so in vain they conceal their riches; for the hand of God can penetrate beyond the sea, land, heaven, and the lowest deep. Nothing then remains for us but ever to offer ourselves and

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all our things to God. If he protects us under his wings, we shall be safe in the midst of innumerable dangers; but if we think that subterfuges will be of any avail to us, we deceive ourselves. The Prophet now adds—

7. All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee *even* to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, *and* prevailed against thee; *they that eat* thy bread have laid a wound under thee: *there is* none understanding in him.

7. Usque ad terminum expulerunt te omnes viri fœderis tui; deceperunt te, prævaluerunt tibi, viri pacifici tui (viri pacis tuæ;) viri panis tui posuerunt vulnus sub te: nulla est intelligentia in eo.

8. Shall I not in that day, saith the Lord, even destroy the wise *men* out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau?

8. Annon in die illa, dicit Jehova, perdam sapientes ex Edom? et intelligentiam è monte Esau? (*hoc est*, è monte Seir.)

Here the Prophet expresses the manner in which God would punish the Idumeans: trusting in their confederacies, they despised God, as we have already had to observe. The Prophet now shows that it is in the power of God to change the minds of men, so that they who were their friends, being suddenly inflamed with rage, would go forth to destroy the Idumeans. Seeing then that they regarded the Assyrians not only as a shield to them, but also as a defence against God himself, the Prophet here declares, that when it would be God's purpose to punish them, there would be no need to send to a distance for agents or instruments to execute his vengeance; for he would arm the Assyrians themselves and the Chaldeans, inasmuch as he could turn the hearts of men as he pleased. We now see the Prophet's meaning; for he here takes away and shakes off the vain confidence of the Idumeans, that they might not harden themselves for being fortified by confederacies and for having powerful friends, for the Lord would turn friends into enemies. *To thy border*, he says, *have they driven thee.* שלח, *shilach*, is properly to send forth or to throw away; some render it, they have followed; as though the Prophet here spoke of the neighbouring nations, and according to their view the meaning is, "However much thy neighbours may love thee, yet nothing will they show of this love, except that they will follow thee with feigned tears, when thine enemies shall lead thee away cap-

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tive." But this is a strained exposition, and corresponds not with the context. The Prophet then describes here, I doubt not, the change, such as would take place, that the Idumeans might know, that they trusted in vain in their power and defences. *The men of thy covenant*, he says, *have driven thee away;* as though he said, "See what thou gainest in anxiously seeking the friendship of those who will yet be thy enemies; hadst thou remained quiet in thy clefts, it would have been much better for thee: but now thou runnest to Assyria and Chaldea, and this will be the cause of thy ruin. Hence *the men of thy covenant shall banish thee to the border:* but if thou hadst had no friendship nor commerce with them, thou mightest have lived safely in thy recesses, no one would have driven thee out: just, then, has been the reward of thy ambition, for having thus resorted to the Assyrians and Chaldeans."

Continuing the same subject, the Prophet says, *Deceived thee have the men of thy peace*—friends and confederates; for the Hebrews call those men of peace, who are connected together by any kind of alliance. *The men* then *of thy peace*, that is, those whom thou thoughtest thou mightest trust, and on whom thou didst rely;—these have deceived thee, even these have prevailed against thee, and oppressed thee through craft and treachery. *The men of thy bread have placed under thee a wound:* the men of bread were those who were guests or friends. Some give this rendering, "Who eat thy bread;" and it is an admissible interpretation, for the Assyrians and Chaldeans, as they were insatiable, had taken booty from the Idumeans; for whosoever then hunted for their friendship, must have brought them some gifts. Since then they thus sold their friendship, the Prophet rightly calls them the men of bread with regard to those whose substance and wealth they devoured. If then we take the men of bread in this sense, there is a probability in the meaning. But we may give another interpretation, as though he had said that they were guests and friends: these then *have fixed under thee a wound*, that is, they have been thy destruction, and that through guile and hidden artifices. When one attacks another openly, he who is attacked can avoid the stroke; but the Prophet says, that the Assyrians and Chaldeans would be perfidious

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to the Idumeans, so as to conquer them through treachery. *Fix* then *shall they a wound under thee*, as when one hides a dagger between the bed and the sheet, when a person intends to go to sleep. So also he says that a wound is placed underneath, when a feigned friend hides himself, that he may more easily hurt him whom he assails deceitfully and craftily.

He at length thus concludes, *There is no intelligence in him.* Here the Prophet no doubt derides in an indirect way the foolish confidence with which the Idumeans were blinded; for they thought themselves to be in a superlative degree wary, so that they had no reason to fear, as they could see afar off, and arrange their concerns with the utmost prudence. Since then they thought that they excelled in wisdom, and could not be surprised by any craft, the Prophet says here, that there would be in them no understanding.

But he immediately subjoins the reason, *Shall I not in that day, saith Jehovah, destroy,* or extinguish, *the wise from Edom?* While the Idumeans were prosperous, because they acted wisely, it was incredible that they could thus in a moment be overthrown: but the Prophet says, that even this was in the hand and power of God; "Can I not," he says, "put an end to whatever there is of wisdom in the Idumeans? Cannot I destroy all their prudent men? This will I do." We now then perceive the import of the words.

But this place deserves notice: the Prophet upbraids the Idumeans, and says, that their confederates and friends would prove their ruin, because they had conspired among themselves beyond what was just and right. When men thus mutually join together, there are none of them who do not greedily seek their own advantage; in the meantime, both sides are deceived; for God disconcerts their counsels, and blasts the issue, because they regard not the right end. And when the wicked seek friendships, they ever blend something that is wrong; they either try to injure the innocent, or they seek some advantage. All the compacts then which the ungodly and the despisers of God make with one another, have always something vicious intermixed; it is therefore no wonder that the Lord disappoints them of their hope, and

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curses their counsels. This is then the reason why the Prophet declares to the Idumeans, that those, whom they thought to be their best and most faithful friends, would be their ruin.

But here it may be objected and said, that the same thing happens to the children of God. For David, though he acted towards all with the utmost faithfulness and the greatest sincerity, yet complains, that the man of his peace and a friend had contrived against him many frauds, 'Raised up his heel against me,' he says, 'has the man of my peace; eat bread together did I with him, and he with me,' (Ps. xli. 9.) It was necessary also that this should have been the case with Christ himself. Now, if the children of God must be conformed to the image of Christ, what the Prophet says is no more than what applies to the whole Church, and to every member of it. This may appear strange at the first view; but a solution may be easily given: for while we strive to maintain peace with all men, though they may perfidiously, through treachery, oppress us, yet the Lord himself will succour us; and in the meantime, however hard may this trial be, we yet know that our patience is tried by God, that he may at last deliver us, so that we may confidently flee to him and testify our sincerity. But while the ungodly mutually cheat one another, while with wicked and sideway artifices they oppress and circumvent each other, while they cast forth their hidden virulence, while they turn peace into war, they know that their recompense is just and merited: they cannot flee to God, for their conscience restrains them. They indeed understand that they have deserved what the Lord has justly repaid them. It is then no wonder that the conspiracy in which the Idumeans trusted, when they made the Chaldeans their friends, should have been accursed; for the Lord turned to their ruin whatever they thought useful to themselves.

This then is the import of the whole,—that if we wish not to be deceived, we must not attempt anything without an upright heart. Provided then we exceed not the limits of our calling, let us cultivate peace with all men, let us endeavour to do good to all men, that the Lord may bless us; but

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if it be his purpose to try our patience, he will be still present with us, though false friends try us by their treacheries, though we be led into danger by their malice, and be for a time trodden under their feet; if, on the contrary, we act with bad faith, and think that we have fortunate alliances, which have been obtained by wicked and nefarious artifices, the Lord will turn for our destruction whatever we think to be for our safety.

We must now notice what the Prophet says, *Shall I not in that day destroy the wise from Edom?* Though men be in many respects blind, whom God guides not by his Spirit, and on whom he shines not with his word, yet the worst blindness is, when men become inebriated with the false conceit of wisdom. When therefore any one thinks himself endued with understanding, so that he can perceive whatever is needful, and that he cannot be circumvented, his wisdom is insanity and extreme madness: it would indeed be better for us to be idiots and fools than to be thus inebriated. Since then the wise of this world are insane, (*phrenetici*—frenetic,) the Lord declares that they will have no wisdom when the time of trial comes. God indeed permits the ungodly for a long time to felicitate themselves on account of their own acumen and counsels, as he suffered the Idumeans to go on prosperously. And there are also many at this day who felicitate themselves on their successes, and almost adore their own cunning. Who indeed can persuade the Venetians that there is anywhere consummate wisdom but among themselves, by which, forsooth, they surpass all others in deception? For no other reason do they, amidst many agitations, retain their own position, except that they seem to see farther into what is for their own advantages; nay, that kings in general stand, and continue safe amidst so many shakings, —this they ascribe to their own wisdom: "Except I had looked well in this respect to my own affairs, except I had anticipated danger, and except I had foreseen it, it would have been all over as to my condition." Thus they think within themselves: but the Lord at length infatuates them, that it may be evident, that this was not formerly said in vain to the Idumeans, *Shall I not in that day, saith Jehovah,*

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&c.? and it was emphatically added, *in that day:* for the Prophet means, that it was no wonder that the Idumeans had been hitherto wary, and adopted the best counsel; for it was not the Lord's purpose to deprive them of wisdom; but when the suitable time of vengeance came, he instantly took away whatever prudence there was in them; for it is indeed in God's hand to take away whatever there is either of understanding or of acuteness in men.

But we are warned by these words, that if we excel in understanding, we are not to abuse this singular gift of God, as we see the case to be with the ungodly, who turn to cunning whatever wisdom the Lord has bestowed on them. There is hardly one in a hundred to be found, who does not seek to be crafty and deceitful, if he excels in understanding. This is a very wretched thing. What a great treasure is wisdom? Yet we see that the world perverts this excellent gift of God; the more reason there is for us to labour, that our wisdom should be founded in true simplicity. This is one thing. Then we must also beware of trusting in our own understanding, and of despising our enemies, and of thinking that we can ward off any evil that may impend over us; but let us ever seek from the Lord, that we may be favoured at all times with the spirit of wisdom, that it may guide us to the end of life: for he can at any moment take from us whatever he has given us, and thus expose us to shame and reproach.

When he says, *from mount Esau*, he means mount Seir, as I have already reminded you. But he meant to point out their whole country; for they were almost surrounded by mountains, and dwelt, as it is well known, in that Arabia which is called Petræ. It follows—

9. And thy mighty *men*, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.

9. Et deficient (*vel*, frangentur) fortes tui, Theman, ut excidatur vir è monte Esau præ occisione (*vel*, quia excidetur; לְמַעַן *enim postest duobis modis exponi.*)

The Prophet, after having spoken of one kind of God's vengeance, adds another,—that he would break whatever there was of strength in Idumea: and thus he shows that the

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courage and strength of men, no less than their understanding, are in the hand of God. As then God dissipates and destroys, whenever it pleases him, whatever wisdom there may be in men, so also he enervates and breaks down their hearts: in a word, he deprives them of all strength, so that they fail and come to nothing of themselves. Were they who are proud of their strength and counsels rightly to consider this, they would at length learn to submit themselves in true humility to God. But this truth is what the world cannot be made to believe: yet God shows to us here, as in a picture, that however men may flourish for a time, they would immediately vanish, were not he to sustain them, and to support his gifts in them, and keep them entire; and, especially, that empty smoke is everything that seems to be understanding and strength in men; for the Lord can easily take away both, whensoever it may please him.

We ought therefore carefully to observe what he says here, *Broken down shall be thy brave men, O Teman.* Some think that a particular country is here pointed out; for Teman is the south, that is, with regard to Judea. But as Teman, we know, was one of the grandsons of Esau, (Gen. xxxvii. 11,) and as a part of Arabia was called by this name, it is the more probable, that the Prophet turns here his discourse to Idumea. But as to the word Teman, it is a part taken for the whole.

For cut off, he says, *shall be man:* by saying, *cut off shall man*, he means, that all to a man would be destroyed. How? *by slaughter.*[1] But קְטֶל, *kothel*, means a slaughter in which no one remains alive. We hence see what the Prophet means,—that all the Idumeans would be so broken down, that all would fall, for there would be no heart nor strength to resist. It now follows—

10. For *thy* violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.

11. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces,

10. Propter oppressionem fratris tui Jacob, operiet te opprobrium, et excideris in perpetuum.

11. Die quo stabas ex opposito, die quo alieni auferebant substantiam ejus, et extranei in-

[1] This word has been by some critics removed to the beginning of the next verse, but as it appears for no sufficient reasons, while indeed there is nothing in the context that requires such a change.—*Ed.*

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and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou *wast* as one of them.

gressi sunt portas ejus, et super Jerusalem miserunt sortem, etiam tu quasi unus ex illis.

The Prophet here sets forth the reason why God would deal so severely and dreadfully with the Idumeans. Had he simply prophesied of their destruction, it would have been an important matter; for the Jews might have thereby known that their ruin was not chance, but the scourge of God; they might have known that they themselves were with others chastised by God, and this would have been a useful instruction to them: but what brought them the chief consolation was to hear, that they were so dear to God that he would undertake the defence of their wrongs and avenge them, that he would have a regard for their safety. Hence, when they heard that God, because he loved them, would punish the Idumeans, it was doubtless an invaluable comfort to them in their calamities. To this subject the Prophet now comes.

For the unjust oppression of thy brother Jacob, &c. The word חָמָס, *chemes*, violence, is to be taken passively; as though he said, "See, how thou hast acted towards thy brother Jacob." And he calls him his brother, not for honour's sake, but, on the contrary, for the purpose of showing forth more fully the cruelty of the Idumeans; for consanguinity had had no effect in preventing them from raging against their own brethren, and as it were against their own bowels. It was therefore a proof of barbarous inhumanity, that the Idumeans, forgetting their common nature, had been so inflamed with hatred against their own brethren: for, as it is well known, they had descended from the same common father, Abraham, and also from Isaac, and had the symbol of circumcision. The Idumeans indeed professed that they were the descendants of Abraham, and were God's peculiar people. Since then God had made his covenant with their common father Isaac, and since they had equally retained circumcision, which was the seal of that covenant, how did it happen, that the Idumeans conducted themselves so cruelly towards their brethren? We hence see, that the name of brother in this clause—*for the oppression of thy brother Jacob*, is mentioned for the purpose of enhancing their crime.

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As then, he says, thou hast been so violent against thy brother, *cover thee shall reproach, and forever shalt thou be cut off.* He intimates that the calamity would not be only for a time as in the case of Israel, but that the Lord would execute such a punishment as would prove that the Idumeans were aliens to him; for God in chastising his Church ever observes certain limits, as he never forgets his covenant. He proves indeed that the Idumeans were not his people, however much they might falsely boast that they were the children of Abraham, and make claim to the sign of circumcision; for they were professedly enemies, and had entirely departed from all godliness: it was then no wonder that their circumcision, which they had impiously profaned, was made no account of. But he afterwards more fully and largely unfolds the same thing.

In the day, he says, *in which thou didst stand on the opposite side.* But the Idumeans might have made this objection, "Why dost thou accuse us for having violently oppressed our brother? for we were not the cause why they were destroyed: they had a quarrel with the Assyrians, we laboured to protect our own interest in the midst of these disturbances; we sought peace with the Assyrians, and if necessity so compelled us, that ought not to be ascribed to us as a crime or blame." In this way the Idumeans might have made a defence: but the Prophet dissipates all such pretences by saying, *In the day in which thou didst stand on the opposite side,* in the day *in which strangers took away his substance, and aliens entered his gates, and cast lots on Jerusalem*—were not thou there? *Even thou wert as one of them.* Now this is emphatically introduced—*Even thou,* or, thou also, *(Tu etiam;)* for the Prophet exhibits it here as a hateful omen: "It was no wonder that the Assyrians and Chaldeans shed the blood of thy brethren, for they were enemies, they were foreigners, they were a very distant people: but thou, who wert of the same blood, thou, whom the bond of religion ought to have restrained, and further, even thou, who oughtest by the very claims of vicinity either to have helped thy brethren, or at least to have condoled with them—yea, thou wert so cruel as to have been *as one* of his enemies: this surely can by no means be endured."

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We now perceive what the Prophet meant by saying, *In the day in which thou didst stand on the opposite side:* it is then, as it were, an explanation of the former sentence, lest the Idumeans should make a false excuse by objecting, that they had not been violent against their brethren. It was indeed the worst oppression, when they stood over against them; though they were not armed, they yet took pleasure in a spectacle so mournful; besides, they not only were idle spectators of the calamity of their brethren, but were also, as it were, a part of their enemies. "Hast thou then not been as one of them?" I shall not proceed farther now.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast once received us under thy protection, and hast promised that our salvation would be so much cared for by thee, that whatever Satan and the whole world may contrive, thou wilt yet keep us safe and secure,—O grant, that being endued with perseverance, we may remain within our borders, and be not carried away here and there either by craft or by wicked counsels; but be thou pleased to keep us in genuine integrity, that being protected by thy help, we may, by experience, find that true which thou declarest in thy word, —that they who call on thee in truth shall ever know thee to be propitious to them: and since thou hast already made open to us an access to thee in the person of thy only-begotten Son, O grant, that we, the sheep, may rely on him, as our shepherd, and resignedly abide under his protection, until we be removed from all dangers into that eternal rest, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lecture Seventy-first.

12. But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress.

13. Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest

12. Et non aspicias in die fratris tui, in die alienationis ejus, et ne gaudeas super filiis Jehudah die exitii eorum, et ne magnifices os tuum in die afflictionis (*hoc est,* ne magnificè loquaris.)

13. Ne intres in portam populi mei die exitii eorum, ne aspicias etiam tu in afflictione

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not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid *hands* on their substance in the day of their calamity;

14. Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.

ejus, (in malo ejus,) in die exitii ejus, et ne extendas (manum *subaudiendum est*) in substantiam ejus in die exitii ejus;

14. Et ne stes super exitum (*vel*, lacerationem, confractionem,) ad perdendum eos qui evaserint, et ne tradas (*vel*, concludas) residuos ejus in die afflictionis.

The Prophet enumerates here the kinds of cruelty which the Idumeans exercised towards the Church of God, the children of Abraham, their own kindred. But he speaks by way of prohibition; it is then a personification, by which the Prophet introduces God as the speaker, as though he taught and admonished them on the duties of human kindness. Engraven, indeed, on their hearts ought all these to have been, on account of which he now reproaches them; for by forgetting humanity they had departed from everything right which nature requires. God indeed did not commence by instructing or teaching the Idumeans what were their duties; but the Prophet reminds them of things which must have been well known to them, and were beyond all dispute true.

Hence he says, *Thou shouldest not look on in the day of thy brother, in the day of his alienation.* The day of Judah he calls that in which God visited him: so the day of Jerusalem is called the day of calamity. *Thou shouldest not* then *look on:* we know in what sense this verb, to look on, is usually taken in Scripture; it is applied to men, when they lie in wait, or very anxiously desire anything, or rejoice at what they witness. The Prophet no doubt takes it metaphorically for taking delight in the misery of the chosen people; for, shortly after, he repeats the same word. *Thou shouldest not* then *look on in the day of thy brother*, even *in the day of his alienation.* Some take another sense; but I approve of their opinion, who regard this alienation as meaning exile; at the same time, they give not the reason for this metaphor, which is this,—that such a change then took place in the people, that they put on a new appearance. It was then alienation, when God wholly abolished the glory of the kingdom of Judah, and when he took away all his favours, so that the appearance of the

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people became deformed. *In the day* then *of his alienation*, that is, when the Lord stripped him of his ancient dignity.

Thou shouldest not rejoice, he says, *over the children of Judah, in the day of their destruction*, that is, of *their* ruin; *thou shouldest not make thy mouth great in the day of affliction.* We now perceive what the Prophet means. Though indeed he seems here to show to the Idumeans, their duty, he yet reproves them for having neglected all the laws of humanity, and of having been carried away by their own pride and cruelty. It hence follows, that they were worthy of that dreadful vengeance which he has already mentioned. In case then the Idumeans complained that God dealt too severely with them, the Prophet here reminds them, that they in many ways sought such a ruin for themselves,—How so? "Wert not thou delighted with the calamity of thy brother? didst not thou laugh when Judah was distressed? and didst not thou speak loftily in ridicule? Was this outrageousness to be endured? Can the Lord now spare thee, as thou hast been so cruel towards thy brother?" And he repeats the name of brother, for the crime was the more atrocious, as it has been already said, as they showed no regard for those of their own blood. But the Prophet often mentions either affliction, or ruin, or calamity, or evils, or adversity; for it is a feeling naturally implanted in us, that when one is distressed, we are touched with pity; even when we see our enemies lie prostrate on the ground, our hatred and anger are extinguished, or at least are abated: and all who see even their enemies ill-treated, become, as it were, other men, that is, they put off the anger with which they were previously inflamed. As then this is what is common almost to all men, it appears that the Idumeans must have been doubly and trebly barbarous, when they rejoiced at the calamity of their brethren, and took pleasure in a spectacle so sad and mournful, and even spoke proudly, and jeered the miserable Jews; for this, as we have said, is the meaning of the words, to *make great the mouth.*

It follows, *Thou shouldest not enter the gates of my people in the day of their destruction, nor shouldest thou look on in their calamity.* Probably the Idumeans had made an irruption in

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company with the Assyrians and Chaldeans, when they ought to have remained at home, and there to lament the slaughter of their brethren. For if I cannot save my friend from death or from a calamity, I shall yet withdraw myself, for I could not bear to look on: but were I constrained to look on my friend, and be not able to succour him in his necessity, I should rather close my eyes; for there is in the eyes, we know, the tenderest sympathy. As then the Idumeans willingly went forth and entered Jerusalem with the enemies, it was hence evident that they were no better than wild beasts. *Thou shouldest not* then, he says, *enter the gates of my people in the day of slaughter, nor shouldest thou, especially then, look on.* He again repeats גם אתה, *gam ate*, Thou also, or, especially thou: "If other neighbours do this, yet thou shouldest abstain, for thou art of the same blood; if thou canst not bring help, show at least some token of grief and of sympathy: but as thou willingly and gladly lookest on their calamities, it is quite evident that there is not in thee a particle of right feeling."

He afterwards adds, *Thou shouldest not stretch forth thy hand to his substance.* Here he accuses the Idumeans of having been implicated in taking the spoils with other enemies, as though he said, "Ye have not only suffered your brethren to be pillaged, but ye became robbers yourselves. Ye ought to have felt sorrow in seeing them distressed by foreign enemies; but ye have plundered with them, and enriched yourselves with spoils; this certainly is by no means to be endured."

It follows, *And thou shouldest not stand on the going forth.* The word פרק, *perek*, signifies to break, to dissipate, to rend; hence פרק, *perek*, as a noun, in Hebrew means rending and breaking. Therefore some take it metaphorically for a place where two ways meet, when one road is cut or divided into two. When the two meet then there is a going forth by two ways; hence they take פרק, *perek*, for such a place. But we may simply take it for the rending of the people. Though I am certainly pleased with the first explanation, yet I do not confine the word to that meaning; and I prefer the idea of going forth, as it harmonises better with the context: Thou

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hast *stood* then *on the going forth;* and for what purpose? *To destroy those who had escaped, and to stop* or to deliver up *his remaining captives in the day of affliction.* In short, the Prophet means that the Idumeans occupied all the ways, to intercept the miserable exiles, to whom flight was the only way of safety.

As then the miserable Jews tried by winding outlets to provide for their own safety, the Prophet says that they were intercepted by the Idumeans, lest any of them should escape, and that they were stopped, that afterwards they might be slain by their enemies. Inasmuch as the Assyrians and the Chaldeans were a people far remote from Judea, it is probable that the roads were unknown to them, and that they were afraid of being entrapped; but the Idumeans, who were familiarly acquainted with all their roads, could stand at all the outlets. Some give the following explanation, but it is too frigid: "Thou shouldest not stand for the rending of thy brethren," that is, thou should not stand still, but strive to extend a helping hand to the distressed: but this, as I have said, is too frigid and strained. *Thou shouldest not* then stand on the going forth *of the roads to destroy.* We now see what the Prophet had in view; *to destroy,* he says, and whom did they destroy? Even those *who had* already *escaped.* Expressly then is pointed out here the cruelty to which I have referred, —that the Idumeans were not contented with the ruin of the city, and the great slaughter which had been made; but in case any had stealthily escaped, they occupied the outlets of the roads, that they might not flee away: and the same thing is meant when he adds, that all were betrayed or stopped who had remained alive in the day of affliction.

We now understand the Prophet's meaning;—that the Idumeans could not complain that God was too severe with them, when he reduced them to nothing, because they had given examples of extreme cruelty towards their own brethren, and at a time when their calamities ought to have obliterated all hatred and old enmities, as it is usually the case even with men the most alienated from one another. Let us proceed—

15. For the day of the Lord *is* near upon all the heathen: as thou hast

15. Quia propinquus dies Jehovæ super omnes gentes;

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done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.

sicut fecisti fiet tibi; merces tua revertetur in caput tuum.

By saying that *the day of Jehovah was nigh upon all nations*, the Prophet may be regarded as reasoning from the greater to the less: "If God will not spare other nations, how canst thou escape his hand?" In a like manner does Jeremiah speak in chap. xlix.: he addresses the Idumeans in these words, 'Behold, they shall drink of the cup, who have not been by judgment condemned to drink; and shalt thou not taste? by drinking thou shalt drink to the very dregs.' He shows then that the Idumeans deserved a double vengeance; for if indeed they were compared with the Assyrians and Chaldeans, the fault of the latter would appear small: the Chaldeans might pretend some causes for the war, they were aliens, they were, in short, professed enemies; but the Idumeans were neighbours and kindred. The same thing might be also said of other nations. But the words may be explained in a simpler manner; and that is, that God would not only take vengeance on one or two nations, but on all. "See," he says, "a change will take place not only in one corner, but in the whole world. The Lord will thus show that he is the judge of the whole earth. Hence it follows, that the Idumeans also must render an account, for God has resolved to execute judgment on all nations; no one whatever shall be passed by."

Behold, then, *nigh is the day of Jehovah.* We have said that the time in which Obadiah prophesied is unknown to us. But it is no matter of wonder that he declares that *nigh is the day of Jehovah;* for the Lord hastens not after the manner of men; but, at the same time, he knows his own seasons; and this is ever accomplished, that when the ungodly think themselves to be at rest, then sudden destruction overtakes them.

He draws this conclusion, *As thou hast done, so shall it be done to thee.* There seems, however, to be here an implied comparison between the chastisement of the chosen people and the punishment which shall be inflicted on other nations. When the Idumeans saw that the kingdom of Israel and of

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Judah was trodden under foot, they thought that the children of Abraham were thus punished because they had despised their own Prophets, because they had become immoral and perverse in the extreme. Thus they exempted themselves and others from punishment. Now the Prophet declares that God had been the judge of his people, but that he is also the judge of the whole world, and that this would quickly be made evident. When, therefore, he says, that *nigh was the day of Jehovah*, he had, I have no doubt, a regard, as I have already said, to the chastisement of the Church; as though he said, "As God has proved himself to be one who justly punishes sins with respect to Israel and Judah; so also at length he will ascend his tribunal to judge all the nations; no one, therefore, shall escape punishment. All then in their different conditions shall be constrained to give an account of their actions, for the Lord will spare none: and though he has begun with his Church and his own house, yet there will come afterwards the suitable time to take vengeance, when he will extend his hand to punish all heathen nations." This seems to me to be the real meaning.

Rightly then does he conclude, *As* then *thou hast done, it shall be done to thee:* "Think not that thou shalt be unpunished for having gone against thy brother. It was God's purpose to exhibit an example of his severity towards others, while he spared thee; but thou hast abused his forbearance; for thou mightest have remained quiet at home: the Lord will then repay thee." And then he subjoins, *Thy reward shall recoil,* or return, *on thine own head.* Here the Prophet announces what Christ also says, 'With what measure any one measures, it shall be repaid to him,' (Matth. vii. 2.) This sentence is worthy of being noticed: for when God leaves the innocent to the will of the ungodly, they think that they may do whatever they please with impunity, as though they were the executioners of God. As then they become thus insolent when the Lord spares them, let us take notice of what the Prophet says here,—that a reward is prepared for every one, and that whatever cruelty the ungodly may exercise, it shall be returned on their own heads. It follows—

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16. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, *so* shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been.

16. Quia sicuti bibistis super montem sanctum meum, bibent omnes gentes jugiter, bibent (inquam) et sorbebunt; et erunt quasi non sint.

Here Obadiah proceeds farther and says, that God would revenge the wrongs done to his Church. The declaration in the last verse was general, "Behold, on all the nations the day of Jehovah is nigh; as then thou hast done, God will repay thee:" but now he shows that this would be, because God purposed to defend his own servants, (*clientes*—clients;) and as they had been cruelly treated, he would become the avenger of their wrongs; *As* then *ye have drunk on my holy mountain, &c.* The Prophet, I have no doubt, taking a part for the whole, included in the word drink their triumphs and rejoicings. As then ye have rejoiced on my holy mountain, so also all the nations shall *drink* and continue their excess; *they shall drink up*, so that ye shall utterly perish. But the Prophet appears to me evidently to add here a proof of their avariciousness. He had shortly before accused the Idumeans of having taken away a part of the spoil, together with the foreign nations, when the miserable Jews were plundered. So also, he says now, *Ye have drunk*, in token of triumph and rejoicing.

Ye have then *drunk* wine *on my holy mountain: now drink shall all the nations.* This latter drinking is to be taken in a sense different from the former. What then? *Drink they shall, and drink up*, that is, "They shall consume all your substance." And he afterwards adds, *And drink they shall continually; and they shall be as though they had not been*, that is, they shall not cease to eat and to drink until they shall consume whatever is among you. He then intimates that the Idumeans, who had enriched themselves with the spoils of their brethren, and who had also kept feastings in token of their joy on the holy mountain, would hereafter be the food of others, for *all the nations would drink, and drink them up.* To drink then here is the same as to consume. It follows, (for I am under the necessity of finishing this prophecy to-day, and time, I hope, will allow me)—

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17. But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.

17. Et in monte Sion erit evasio, et erit sanctitas (*nempe mons ipse*;) et possidebit domus Jacob possessiones suas (*alii vertunt*, eos à quibus possidebantur.

Here the Prophet promises deliverance to the Jews; for other consolations would have been of no great moment, had they, who then were perishing, no hope of being some time restored to safety. The Jews might indeed have objected, and said, "What is it to us, though the Lord may avenge our wrongs? Should the Idumeans be destroyed for our sake, what profit will that be to us? We are in the meantime destroyed, and have no hope of deliverance." The Prophet here meets this objection, and says, *In mount Zion shall be escape.* Though then the Idumeans had attempted to intercept all outlets, as it has been before mentioned, yet God promises here that there would be an escape in mount Zion: he says not, from mount Zion, but in the very mountain. What does this mean? even that God would restore those who might seem then to be lost. Then Obadiah clearly promises that there would be a restoration of the Church.

But we are taught in this place, that the punishment, by which the Lord chastises his people for their sins, is ever for a time. Whenever then God inflicts wounds on his Church, prepared at the same time is the remedy; for God designs not, nor does he suffer, that his own people should be wholly lost. This we may learn from the Prophet's words, when he says, that there would be escape in Zion. And it was no ordinary comfort for the Jews to know, that even in their extreme decay, there remained for them some hope of deliverance, and that the people, who might appear at the time to be extinct, would yet be saved, and preserved alive, as though they arose from the dead.

He says that mount Zion would *be holiness* or holy, by which he means that God would be mindful of his covenant. As then he had chosen mount Zion, where he would be worshipped, the Prophet intimates that God's name was not there invoked presumptuously or in vain. Inasmuch as God had chosen this mount for himself, it was *holy;* for God is

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said to have profaned the land and the temple, when he forsook them and delivered them up into the hands of enemies. So also now when the Prophet says, that mount Zion would be *holy*, it is the same as though he had said, that God would have a care for this mountain, because he had once consecrated it to himself, and designed it to be his own habitation. The cause then is put here for its effect. He had said, that the Jews would survive, how much soever like the lost and the dead they might for a time be,—How could such a thing be? The reason is this,—mount Zion shall be holy: it was a dreadful profanation of mount Zion, when the temple was destroyed, when the holy vessels were taken away by the Babylonians, when, in short, the enemies showed there every kind of insolence. But when the Lord restored his people, when the altar was built again, and sacrifices were offered, then mount Zion recovered its holiness, that is, God manifested that the grace of his election had not been abolished, for he had again sanctified mount Zion, and thus designed it to be preserved safe. *Holy* then *shall be mount Zion.* Were any one disposed to refine more on the Prophet's words, he might say, that it is evidently the manner of our salvation that is intended, when God is said to sanctify or govern us by his Spirit: but the Prophet, I have no doubt, has regard here simply to the election of God.

And the house of Jacob shall again *possess his own possessions*, that is, whatever God has given as an heritage to the children of Abraham, he will restore to them when they return from exile. If any one prefers to take *possessions* to be those of Edom, I do not object. But yet I think that the real meaning of the Prophet is, that when the children of Israel should return from exile, God would restore to them their ancient country, that they might possess whatever had been promised to their father Abraham. He means then, by their possessions, the whole land, which came by lot into the possession of the chosen people, as it had been promised to Abraham. It follows-

18. And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a

18. Et erit domus Jacob ignis, et domus Joseph in flammam (flamma,

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flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them and devour them; and there shall not be *any* remaining of the house of Esau; for the Lord hath spoken *it*.

ut respondeat,) et domus Esau erit palea; et ardebunt in ipsis et consument (vorabunt) eos; et non erit quidquam residuum domui Esau, quia Jehova loquutus est.

Here again the Prophet meets a doubt, which might come into the mind of each of them; for the Idumeans were flourishing, and their condition was independent, when the Israelites as well as the Jews were led into exile, and Jerusalem with its temple was destroyed. They might under such circumstances despair; but the Prophet shows, that though for a time the house of Jacob seemed to be dead, yet a fire would be kindled, which would consume the Idumeans, though they were then proud of their power and their wealth, and also of the prosperous issue of the victory over the Jews, for they had been enriched, as well as the Assyrians, by the overthrow of their brethren. A similar mode of speaking Isaiah also adopts; though he directs his discourse, not to the Idumeans, but to others, yet his manner of speaking is the same, when he says, that God, the light of Israel, would be a fire and a flame to consume the wicked, (Isa. xxix. 6.)

But this was fulfilled, when the Lord avenged the cruelty of Edom, though the Jews were then in exile and could not move a finger, when they were without arms, yea, when they were miserable slaves: the Idumeans were even then consumed, —by what fire? how was this burning kindled? Even then *the house of Jacob* and *the house of Joseph* were like *a fire and a flame*. The cause of this ruin, it is true, did not immediately appear to the Idumeans: but we must here look to the purpose of God. Why did God with so much severity punish the Idumeans? Because he intended by this example to show how much he loved his Church. Since then their cruelty was the cause of ruin to the Idumeans, rightly does the Prophet say, that the house of Jacob and the house of Joseph would be like a fire and a flame to consume the Idumeans. And it was not a small solace to the miserable exiles, when they understood, that they were still regarded by God in their depressed condition. Inasmuch then as they were exposed to the reproach and ridicule of all, it pleased God to testify that they were

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the objects of his care, and that he would, for their sake, destroy whole nations, even those who then gloried in their power. We now then see why the Prophet adopted this figurative language. By the house of Joseph, he means, as we have said elsewhere, the kingdom of Israel; he mentions a part for the whole. It follows—

19. And *they of* the south shall possess the mount of Esau; and *they of* the plain the Philistines: and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria; and Benjamin *shall possess* Gilead.

20. And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel *shall possess* that of the Canaanites, even unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which *is* in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south.

19. Et possidebunt meridiem montis Esau, et planietiem Philistim, et possidebunt agros Ephraim et agros Samariæ; et Benjamin possidebit Gilead.

20. Et migratio exercitus hujus filiorum Israel, quod Chananæorum fuit usque ad Zerphath (*vel*, qui sunt in Chananæis,) et migratio Jerusalem, quod in Sepharad, possidebunt (*in quam*) urbes Australes (*vel*, meridionales.)[1]

[1] The rendering of the first of these two verses is materially different from our version. There are difficulties here which are considerable. Our version in the first part follows the Septuagint; and others have followed the same, such as *Newcome* and *Henderson*, though *Junius* and *Tremelius* and *Dathius* have rendered it materially the same with Calvin, and certainly more in consistency with the Hebrew text. The following may be considered as a literal version of the whole verse:—

19. And they shall inherit the south, the mount of Esau,
And the plain, *even* that of the Philistines,
And they shall inherit the field of Ephraim and the field of Samaria,
And of Benjamin, even Gilead.

The word "to possess" does not convey the meaning of ירשׁ, which means to inherit, or to possess by inheritance, as Junius and Tremelius render it—*hæreditario jure possidebunt*—"They shall possess by an hereditary right." And this exactly corresponds with Calvin's explanation. Though our version follows the Septuagint in the two first lines, it yet departs from it in the two last.

But the 20th verse is the most difficult. "Captivity" is more properly "migration" or transmigration, as Calvin renders it. Then follow the words, החל־הזה לבני ישראל, literally, in my view, "the beginning, this, to the children of Isbrael." So the Septuagint takes the word החל, as meaning "beginning," and not "host:" it wants the ן, except in three copies, and it always has this, when it means a host. I propose the following translation:—

And the migration, which commenced with the children of Israel,
Shall inherit what the Canaanites had as far as Sarephath;
And the migration from Jerusalem, which are in Saphrad,
The cities of the south.

The latter verse is a fuller explanation of the former; and, as is the case commonly in Hebrew, when two things previously mentioned are referred

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The Prophet proceeds with the same subject,—that God would not only gather the remnants of his people from the Babylonian exile, but would restore the exiles, that they might rule far and wide, and that their condition might be better than it was before: for the Prophet, as I think, directs the attention to the first blessing of God, which had been deposited in the hand of Abraham. God had promised to the posterity of Abraham the whole land from Euphrates to the sea. Now this land had never been possessed by the children of Abraham. This happened, as it is well known, through their sloth and ingratitude. David in his time enlarged the borders; but yet he only made those tributaries whom God had commanded to be destroyed. So this blessing had never been fulfilled, because the people put a hinderance in the way. The Prophet now, speaking of the restoration of the Church, tells the people, who would return from exile, that they were to occupy the country which had been promised to their fathers, as though he said, "There will come to you a full and complete inheritance."

Now it is certain that this prophecy has never been completed: we know that but a small portion of the land was possessed by the Jews. What then are we to understand by this prophecy? It does unquestionably appear that the Prophet speaks here of the kingdom of Christ; and we know that the Church was then really restored, and that the Jews not only recovered their former state from which they had fallen, but that their kingdom was increased: for how great became the splendour of the kingdom and of the temple under Christ? This then is what the Prophet now means, when he promises to the Jews the heritage which they had lost; yea, God then enlarged the borders of Judea. Hence he shows that they should not only be restored to their former condition, but that the kingdom would be increased in splendour and wealth, when Christ should come. Let us now run over the words.

to, the order is reversed, the last particular is mentioned first, so it is here. The verb "inherit" is in the last clause in Hebrew; but the idiom of our language requires it to be in the first.—*Ed.*

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Possess then *shall they the south of the mount of Esau.* The space was no doubt great: even when David reigned, the Jews did not possess that part or south portion of mount Seir. Then the Prophet, as I have said, shows that the borders of the kingdom would be more extensive than they had been. *And the plain*, he says, *of the Philistines.* On that side also the Lord would cause that the Jews would extend farther than their kingdom. *And possess they shall the fields of Ephraim.* Here I will not spend much labour in describing the land: but it is enough for us to understand that the design of the Prophet was to show, that the state of the people after their exile would be far more splendid than it had been before, even under the reign of David. What he means by Gilead is not very clear: but it is not probable that mount Gilead is referred to here, which was not far distant from the tribe of Benjamin, but rather that a town or some place distant from that part, and not included in their portion, is pointed out.

He afterwards adds, *And the migration of this host of the children of Israel, &c.* There is here an obscurity in the words. The Hebrews by Canaan mean the Illyrians as well as Germans, and also the Gauls: for they say, that the migration, which shall be dispersed in Gaul, and in Germany, and in these far regions, shall possess the southern cities. Now by Zarephath they understand Spain. But we know, as we have elsewhere said, that the Jews are very bold in their glosses: for they are not ashamed to trifle and to blend frivolous things; and they assert this as though it were evident from history, and easily found out. Thus they prattle about things unknown to them, and this they do without any reason or discrimination. The Prophet, I doubt not, means here that all those territories, which had been formerly promised to the children of Abraham, would come into their possession when the Lord would send his Christ, not only to restore what had fallen, but also to render the state of the people in every way blessed. The import of the whole then is, that the Jews shall not only recover what they had lost, but what had not hitherto been given them to possess: all this the Lord would bestow on them when Christ came. It follows—

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21. And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's.

21. Et ascendent servatores in montem Sion, ad judicandum montem Esau; et erit Jehovæ regnum.

Here the Prophet says, that there are in God's hand ministers, the labour of whom he employs to preserve his own people. He alludes here, I have no doubt, to the history of the judges. We indeed know that the people of Israel were often so distressed, that their deliverance was almost incredible; and that yet they were also delivered in such a way as to have made it evident that the hand of God had appeared from heaven. Since this then was well known to the Jews, the Prophet here reminds them that God had still in his hand redeemers, whenever it might please him to gather his people. God then shall send *preservers*, even as he did send them formerly to your fathers. They had indeed found true by experience what the Prophet says here, not only once, but more than ten times. This then ought to have served much to confirm this prophecy.

Ascend then shall they who will judge the mount of Esau, —who, being endued with the power of God and his authority, will execute judgment on mount Seir and on the whole nation, and will avenge the cruelty which Edom had exercised towards the children of Abraham.

But this passage shows, that Christ came not to be the minister of our deliverance and salvation in an ordinary way, but that he became our saviour in a special manner, so that he stands alone in that capacity: and this is a very strong argument against the Jews. They confess that the Messiah would be the Redeemer of his people, but they ascribe this office to him in a general way, as they do to David and other kings. But it certainly appears from this passage, that the Messiah would not be of the common class, for saviours would be under him as his ministers. This the Jews dare not to deny, though they grumble: for it would be absurd that he should be one of their number. Since then he was sent to be a Redeemer and Saviour in a way different from others, it follows that he is not man only, but that he is the Author of salvation. It would indeed be easy to reply, "Why do you

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speak to us of many redeemers? Do you not hope for one Saviour? If God will commit this office to many in an equal degree, why are there so many glorious promises respecting the Messiah? Why are we ever reminded of him alone? Why is he alone set forth to us as the ground of our salvation?" It hence certainly appears, that Christ is to be distinguished from all others, and that others are saviours under his authority; and such were the apostles, and such are all at this day, the labour and ministry of whom God employs to defend and support his Church.

Now he adds, *Jehovah's shall be the kingdom.* But as it is certain, that it was God's purpose to rule among his people after having restored them, in no other way than by the power of Christ, the Prophet, by saying that the kingdom of Christ would be Jehovah's, means, that it would be really divine, and more illustrious than if he had employed the labour of men. But two things must be here observed by us,—that God himself really rules in the person of Christ,—and that it is the legitimate mode of ruling the Church, that God alone should preside, and hold alone the chief power. Hence it follows, that when God does not appear as the only King, all things are in confusion, without any order. Now God is not called a King by way of an empty distinction: but then only is he regarded a King in reality, when all submit themselves to him, when they are ruled by his word; in short, when all creatures become silent in his presence. To God then belongs the kingdom. We hence see that the Church has no existence, where the word of God does not so prevail in its authority, as to keep down whatever height there is in men, and to bring them under the yoke, so that all may depend on God alone, that all may look up to him, and that he may have all in subjection to himself.

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PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are so scattered in our pilgrimage in this world, that even a dreadful spectacle is presented to our eyes, when we see thy Church so miserably rent asunder,—O grant, that being endued with the real power of thy Spirit, and gathered into one, we may so cultivate brotherly kindness among ourselves, that each may strive to help another, and at the same time keep our eyes fixed on Christ Jesus; and though hard contests may await us, may we yet be under his care and protection, and so exercise patience, that having finished our warfare, we may at last enjoy that blessed rest, which thou hast promised to us, and which is laid up for us in heaven, and which has also been purchased for us by the blood of Christ thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

END OF THE COMMENTARIES ON OBADIAH.

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A TRANSLATION

OF

CALVIN'S VERSION OF THE PROPHECIES

OF

JOEL, AMOS, OBADIAH,

AS MODIFIED BY

HIS COMMENTARIES.

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A TRANSLATION

OF

CALVIN'S VERSION

OF

THE PROPHECIES OF JOEL.

CHAPTER I.

[1] THE word of Jehovah which came to Joel, the son of Pethuel.

[2] Hear this, ye the aged;
And give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land;
Hath this been in your days,
Or in the days of your fathers?
[3] This to your children declare,
And your children to their children,
And their children to the next generation,—
[4] "The residue of the locust hath the chafer eaten,
"The residue of the chafer hath the cankerworm eaten,
"The residue of the cankerworm hath the caterpillar eaten."

[5] Awake, ye drunkards, and weep;
Howl ye all who drink wine for the new wine;
For cut off it is from your mouth.

[6] Verily a nation came up over my land,

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Strong and without number;
Its teeth the teeth of a lion,
And its jaw-bones *those* of a young lion:
7 It exposed my vine to desolation,
And my fig-tree to the stripping of the bark;
By denuding it denuded it and cast it away,
White have been made its branches.—
8 Lament as a young woman, girded with sackcloth,
For the husband of her youth.

9 Cut off is offering and libation
From the house of Jehovah;
Mourn do the priests, the ministers of Jehovah;
10 Wasted is the field, mourn does the land;
For laid waste is the corn,
Dried up is the wine, destroyed is the oil.

11 Be ashamed, ye husbandmen, howl, ye vinedressers,
On account of the wheat and the barley;
For perished has the harvest of the field,
12 The vine is dried up, and the fig-tree is destroyed;
The pomegranate, the palm also and the apple-tree,—
All the trees of the field have dried up:
Verily dried up is joy among the children of men!

13 Be girded and lament, ye priests;
Howl, ye ministers of the altar;
Come, spend the night in sackcloth,
Ye ministers of my God;
For withheld from the house of your God
Is offering and libation:
14 Sanctify a fast, call an assembly,
Gather the elders, all the inhabitants of the land,
Into the house of Jehovah your God,
And cry ye to Jehovah.—
15 Alas the day! for nigh is the day of Jehovah,
And as a desolation from the Almighty will it come.

16 Has not the meat before your eyes been cut off,

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Joy and gladness from the house of our God?
17 Rotted have the grains under the clods,
Desolate are the granaries,
Pulled down have been the barns,
For dried up has the corn.
18 How has the beast groaned!
Confounded are the herds of oxen!
For wanting to them are pastures;
The flocks of sheep are also desolate.

19 To thee Jehovah will I cry;
For the fire hath consumed the pastures of the desert,
And the flame hath burnt all the trees of the field:
20 The beasts of the field will also cry to thee;
For dried up have the streams of waters,
For the fire hath consumed the pastures of the desert.

CHAPTER II.

1 Sound ye the trumpet in Zion,
And cry aloud on my holy mountain:
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble;
For coming is the day of Jehovah, for nigh it is,—
2 A day of darkness and of thick darkness,
A day of cloudiness and of obscurity,
Like the dawn expanding over the mountains,—
A people, great and strong,
The like of them has not been from the beginning,
Nor after them shall be for many generations;
3 Before them, a devouring fire,
And after them, a flame, shall burn;
Like the garden of Eden the land before them,
And after them, a desert of solitude;
And so there will be no escape from them:
4 As the appearance of horses, their appearance,
And as horsemen will they run;

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5 As the sound of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap,
As the sound of the flame of fire devouring the stubble,
As a strong people prepared for battle;
6 Their face will the people dread,
All faces will gather blackness;
7 As giants will they run here and there,
As men of war will they ascend the wall,
And each in his ways will proceed,
And they shall not stay their goings;
8 No one will thrust his brother,
Every one in his way will march on;
On the sword shall they fall, and shall not be wounded:
9 Through the city shall they go, over the wall shall they run,
Into houses shall they climb,
Into the windows shall they enter like a thief:
10 Before them shall tremble the earth,
And in anguish shall be the heavens,
The sun and moon shall be darkened,
And the stars shall withdraw their brightness;
11 And Jehovah will utter his voice before his army,
For very great will be his camp,
For strong is he who doeth his word;
For great will be the day of Jehovah,
And very terrible, and who will endure it?

12 But even now, saith Jehovah,
Turn to me with your whole heart,
And with fasting, and weeping, and mourning;
13 And rend your heart, and not your garments,
And turn to Jehovah your God;
For he is propitious and merciful,
Slow to wrath, and abundant in goodness,
And will repent of the evil:
14 Who knows, whether he will return and repent,
And leave behind him a blessing—
An offering and a libation to Jehovah your God?
15 Sound ye the trumpet in Zion,

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Sanctify a fast, proclaim a meeting,
16 Gather the people, sanctify the assembly,
Bring together the aged, gather the children
And those sucking the breasts;
And let the bridegroom come forth from his recess,
And the bride from her chamber;
17 Between the porch and the altar let the priests,
The ministers of Jehovah, weep and say,—
"Be propitious, Jehovah, to thy people,
"And give not thy heritage to reproach,
"That the nations should rule over them;
"Why should they say among the people,
"'Where is their God?'"

18 Then jealous will Jehovah be for his land,
And he will be propitious to his people;
19 And Jehovah will answer, and say to his people:[1]
"Behold, I will send to you corn, and wine, and oil,
"And ye shall be satisfied with them;
"And I will make you no more a reproach among the nations;
20 "And the Northlander will I remove far from you,
"And drive him to a desert and dry land,
"*With* his face to the eastern sea,
"And his rear to the hindmost sea;
"And ascend shall his ill savour,
"And ascend shall his rottenness;
"For high hath he exalted himself to do *his purpose.*"

21 Fear not, thou land; exult and rejoice;
For Jehovah hath high exalted himself to do *his purpose:*
22 Fear not, ye beasts of the field;
For grow shall the pastures of the desert,
For the tree shall bring forth its fruit,
The fig-tree and the vine shall yield their substance:
23 And ye children of Zion, exult,

[1] This line is rendered according to the version of Calvin, and not according to his comment. See p. 75.

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And rejoice in Jehovah your God;
For he will give you rain in due measure,
And make to come down for you the showering rain,
And the rain in the first month;
24 And filled shall the floors be with corn,
And overflow shall the vats with wine and oil;
25 And I will restore years to you
For those which the locust hath eaten,
The chafer, and the caterpillar,—
My great army, which I sent to you:
26 And eating, ye shall eat and satisfy yourselves,
And shall praise the name of Jehovah your God,
Because he hath dealt wondrously with you;
And ashamed shall not my people be for ever.
27 And ye shall know that in the midst of Israel I am,
And that I Jehovah am your God, and none else;
And ashamed shall not my people be for ever.

28 And it shall be afterwards,
That I will pour my Spirit on all flesh,
And prophesy shall your sons and your daughters,
And your old men shall dreams dream,
And your young men shall visions see;
29 And also on servants and maid-servants
Will I in those days pour my Spirit:
30 And I will set prodigies in heaven and on earth,—
Blood and fire, and columns of mist;
31 The sun shall be turned into darkness,
The moon into blood,
Before it comes—the day of Jehovah, great and terrible:
32 Then it shall be, that whosoever shall call
On the name of Jehovah, shall be delivered;
For in mount Zion and in Jerusalem
Shall be deliverance, as Jehovah hath promised,
And for the residue whom Jehovah shall call.

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CHAPTER III.

[1] For, behold, in those days, and at that time,
When I shall restore the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,
I will then gather all the nations,
And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat;
And I will there contend with them,
For my people and for my heritage Israel;
Because they have scattered them among the nations,
[2] And divided my land, and on my people cast lots,
And have given a boy for a harlot,
And have sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.
[3] And yet, what have ye to do with me,
O Tyre and Sidon, and all the borders of Palestine?
Will ye recompense return to me?
[4] Now if ye repay me with this,
Quickly—suddenly will I return
Your recompense on your own head.
[5] Because ye have taken away my silver and my gold,
And my desirable things have removed to your temples,
[6] And have sold the children of Judah and the children of Jerusalem
To the children of the Grecians,
That ye might drive them far from their own borders;—
[7] Behold, I will raise them from the place to which ye have sold them,
And will return your recompense on your head;
[8] For I will sell your sons and your daughters to the children of Judah,
And they shall sell them to the Sabeans, a distant nation;
For *thus* hath Jehovah spoken.

[9] Publish this among the nations,
Proclaim a war, rouse the strong,
Let them come, let them ascend, all the men of war:
[10] Beat your plowshares into swords,

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And your pruning-hooks into spears;
Let the weak say, "I am strong."
[11] Assemble and come all ye nations,
Assemble all around;
There will Jehovah lay prostrate all thy valiant ones.
[12] Awake let the nations, and ascend to the valley of Jehoshaphat;
For there will I sit to judge all the nations around.

[13] Put forth the sickle, for ripened has the harvest;
Come, go down, for full is the wine-press,
Overflowing are the vats,
For multiplied has their wickedness.
[14] Nations! nations! in the valley of the sledge;
For nigh is Jehovah's day in the valley of the sledge:
The sun and the moon shall be darkened,
And the stars shall withdraw their brightness;
[15] And Jehovah from Zion shall roar,
And from Jerusalem shall utter his voice,
And tremble shall the heavens and the earth;
[16] But Jehovah will be a hope to his people,
And a strength to the children of Israel:
[17] Then ye shall know that I Jehovah am your God,
Dwelling in Zion, the mount of my holiness;
And Jerusalem shall be holiness,
And aliens shall pass through it no more.

[18] And it shall be in that day,
That distil new wine shall the mountains,
And the hills shall cause milk to run down,
And all the rivers of Judah shall send forth waters;
A fountain also from the house of Jehovah shall go forth,
And it shall water the valley of Shittim.

[19] Egypt shall be a solitude,
And Edom shall be a desert of solitude,
For the outrage done to the children of Judah,
Because they shed innocent blood in their own land:

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20 But Judah shall for ever safely dwell,
And Jerusalem shall be from age to age;
And I will cleanse their blood *which* I have not cleansed,
And Jehovah *shall* dwell in Zion.

END OF NEW TRANSLATION OF JOEL.

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A TRANSLATION

OF

CALVIN'S VERSION

OF

THE PROPHECIES OF AMOS.

CHAPTER I.

[1] THE words of Amos, who was among the shepherds at Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel, in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake; and he said,—

[2] Jehovah from Zion will roar,
And from Jerusalem will he utter his voice;
And perish shall the habitations of shepherds,
And wither shall the top of Carmel.

[3] Thus saith Jehovah,—
For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four,
I will not be propitious to it; (157)
Because they have threshed Gilead with iron wains:
[4] And I will send fire into the house of Hazael,
And it shall devour the palaces of Benhadad;
[5] And I will break in pieces the bar of Damascus,

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And cut off the inhabitant from the plain of Aven,
And the holder of the sceptre from the house of Eden;
And removed shall be the people of Syria to Kir, saith Jehovah.

6 Thus saith Jehovah,—
For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four,
I will not be propitious to it;
For they carried away a complete captivity,
To shut them up in Edom:
7 And I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza,
And it shall devour its palaces;
8 And I will cut off the inhabitant from Azotus,
And the holder of the sceptre from Ascalon;
And I will turn my hand against Ekron,
And perish shall the remnants of the Philistines,
Saith the Lord Jehovah.

9 Thus saith Jehovah,—
For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four,
I will not be propitious to it;
For they have shut up a complete captivity in Edom,
And have not remembered the covenant of brethren:
10 And I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus,
And it shall devour its palaces.

11 Thus saith Jehovah,—
For three transgressions of Edom, and for four,
I will not be propitious to it;
For he pursued with the sword his own brother,
And destroyed his own compassions;
And raged continually has his anger,
And his wrath has he kept perpetually:
12 And I will send a fire on Teman,
And it shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.

13 Thus saith Jehovah,—
For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and for four,

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I will not be propitious to him;
For they have rent the pregnant women of Gilead,
That they might extend their own borders:
14 And I will kindle a fire on the wall of Rabbah,
And it shall devour its palaces,
With clamour in the day of battle,
With a whirlwind in the day of tempest;
15 And pass shall its king into captivity,
He and his princes together, saith Jehovah.

CHAPTER II.

1 Thus saith Jehovah,—
For three transgressions of Moab, and for four,
I will not be propitious to him;
For he burnt the bones of the king of Edom into ashes:
2 And I will send a fire on Moab,
And it shall devour the palaces of Kirioth;
And die in a tumult shall Moab,
With shouting, at the sound of the trumpet;
3 And I will cut off the judge from the midst of him,
And with him all his princes will I slay, saith Jehovah.

4 Thus saith Jehovah,—
For three transgressions of Judah, and for four,
I will not be propitious to him;
For they have despised the law of Jehovah,
And his statutes have they not kept;
And to go astray have their lies made them,
After which their fathers walked:
5 And I will send a fire on Judah,
And it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.

6 Thus saith Jehovah,—
For three transgressions of Israel, and for four,
I will not be propitious to him;
For they have sold the just for silver, and the poor for shoes;

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7 Panting for the dust of the earth on the head of the needy,
They turn aside the way of the miserable;
The son and his father enter in into the *same* maid,
So that they profane my holy name;
8 And on pledged garments they lie near every altar,
And the wine of the condemned they drink
In the house of their god.
9 Yet I exterminated the Amorite before their face,
Whose tallness was like the tallness of cedars,
And who was strong like the oak;
And I destroyed his fruit above and his root beneath;
10 And I brought you up from the land of Egypt,
And led you in the desert forty years,
That you might possess the land of the Amorite;
11 And I raised up Prophets from your sons,
And from your youths, Nazarites;—
Have I not done all this,
O children of Israel, saith Jehovah:
12 But to the Nazarites have ye quaffed wine;
And on my Prophets have ye laid a command,
Saying, "Ye shall not prophesy."

13 Behold, I am fast bound under you, (196)
As a waggon is bound, which is full of sheaves.—
14 Perish shall flight from the swift,
And the valiant shall not confirm his strength,
And the strong shall not deliver his life,
15 And the holder of the bow shall not stand,
And the swift on foot shall not escape,
Nor shall he who mounts a horse save his life;
16 Yea, the strong of heart, among the valiant,
Shall flee away naked in that day, saith Jehovah.

CHAPTER III.

1 Hear ye this word which Jehovah pronounces
Against you, children of Israel—against the whole family,
Which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying,—

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2 "Only you have I known of all the families of the earth,
"I will therefore visit on you all your iniquities."

3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?
4 Will a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey?
Will a young lion roar in his den, when nothing is taken?
5 Will a bird fall into a snare on the ground without a fowler?
Will a fowler take up his snare from the ground before he catches?
6 Shall a trumpet sound in a city, and the people tremble not?
Shall there be an evil in a city, which Jehovah hath not done?
7 For nothing will the Lord Jehovah do,
Except he has revealed his secret to his servants the Prophets.
8 The lion hath roared, who would not fear?
The Lord Jehovah hath spoken, who would not prophesy?

9 Publish in the palaces of Ashdod,
And in the palaces of the land of Egypt, and say,—
"Assemble ye on the mountains of Samaria,
"And see the great tumults within it,
"And the oppressions in the midst of it."
10 And they know not how to do right, saith Jehovah,
Treasuring up *the fruit* of robbery and plunder in their palaces.

11 Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah,—
Lo, an adversary! and one around the land!
And he will take from thee thy strength,
And plundered shall be thy palaces.
12 Thus saith Jehovah,—
As when a shepherd snatches from the mouth of a lion
Two legs and the extreme part of the ear,
So shall be rescued the children of Israel,
Who dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed,
And in Damascus on a couch.

13 Hear ye and testify to the house of Israel,
Saith the Lord Jehovah, the God of hosts,—

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14 That in the day in which I shall visit upon him the sins of
Israel,
I will also visit the altars of Bethel;
And broken shall be the horns of the altar,
And they shall fall to the ground;
15 And I will smite the winter-house with the summer-house,
And perish shall the houses of ivory,
And come to an end shall the great houses, saith Jehovah.

CHAPTER IV.

1 Hear this word, ye cows of Bashan,
Which are on the mountain of Samaria,
Which oppress the poor, which crush the needy,
Which say to their masters, "Bring, and we shall drink."
2 Sworn hath the Lord Jehovah by his sanctuary,
That, lo, the days are coming on you,
That he will take you away by a hook,
And your residue by a fishing-hook;
3 And through the breaches shall ye go out,
Each one over against her;
And ye shall cast yourselves down from the palace, saith
Jehovah.

4 Go ye to Bethel and transgress,
And in Gilgal transgress still more,
And bring, in the morning, your sacrifices,
In the third year, your tithes,
5 And burn incense with the leaven of thanks-offering.
And publish voluntary offerings, proclaim *them*;
For so it hath pleased you, O children of Israel,
Saith the Lord Jehovah.

6 But I even gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities,
And want of bread in all your borders;
Yet ye turned not to me, saith Jehovah:
7 I also withheld from you the rain,
When as yet there were three months to the harvest;

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And I rained on one city,
And on another city I made it not to rain;
One part was rained upon,
And the part where it rained not dried up;
[8] And there came two *and* three cities to one city,
To drink water, and were not satisfied;
Yet ye turned not to me, saith Jehovah:
[9] I smote you with the east wind and mildew;
Your large gardens and your vineyards, (236)
And your fig-trees and your olives the chafer devoured;
Yet ye turned not to me, saith Jehovah:
[10] I sent on you the plague after the manner of Egypt;
I smote with the sword your strong men,
And led captive your horses;
I made to ascend the stench of your camps even to your nostrils;
Yet ye turned not to me, saith Jehovah:
[11] I overthrew you as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,
And ye were as a brand snatched from the burning;
Yet ye turned not to me, saith Jehovah.

[12] Therefore thus will I do to thee, Israel,
And because I will this do to thee,
Prepare thyself to meet thy God, Israel.
[13] For, behold, he who formed the mountains,
Who created the spirit,
Who declares to man what is his thought,
Who makes the dawn and the darkness,
Who walks on the high places of the earth,—
Jehovah, God of Hosts, is his name.

CHAPTER V.

[1] Hear ye this word which I raise upon you,
Even a lamentation, O house of Israel.
[2] Fallen is the virgin of Israel, and she will rise no more;
Left is she on her land, none is there to raise her up.
[3] For thus saith the Lord Jehovah,—

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The city from which went forth a thousand,
There will remain in it a hundred;
And *that* from which went forth a hundred,
There will remain ten to the house of Israel.

4 For thus saith Jehovah to the house of Israel,—
Seek ye me, and ye shall live;
5 And seek not Bethel, and to Gilgal go not,
And pass not over to Beersheba;[1]
For Gilgal by migrating shall migrate,
And Bethel shall be as nothing:
6 Seek Jehovah, and ye shall live,
Lest he advance as a fire on the house of Joseph,
And devour it, and there be none to quench it in Bethel.
7 They turn judgment into wormwood,
And righteousness they cast on the ground.—
8 He who made Pleiades and Orion, (261)
Who turns darkness into morning,
And darkens the day into night,
Who calls the waters of the sea,
And pours them on the face of the earth,—
Jehovah is his name;
9 Who strengthens a waster against the strong,
And against fortresses shall a waster ascend. (263)

10 They hate in the gate a reprover,
And the speaker of right they abominate.
11 As ye have trodden the poor under foot, (266)
And a burden of corn have taken from him,
Houses of hewn stone shall ye build,
But ye shall not dwell in them;
And pleasant vineyards shall ye plant,
But ye shall not drink their wine;
12 For I know your many iniquities, and your mighty sins;
Oppressors of the just! and takers of ransom!
And the poor in the gate they turn aside.

[1] "And travel not to Beersheba," or, "make no pilgrimage to Beersheba." The verb עבר expresses going abroad to another country. Beersheba belonged to the kingdom of Judah.—*Bp. Horsley.*

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13 Therefore the prudent at that time will be silent,
For an evil time it is. (270)

14 Seek ye good, and not evil, that ye may live;
And so Jehovah, the God of Hosts,
Will be with you, as ye have said.
15 Hate evil, and love good,
And set up judgment in the gate;
It may be, that Jehovah, the God of Hosts,
Will show mercy to the remnants of Joseph.

16 Therefore Jehovah, the God of Hosts, the Lord, saith,—
In all the streets of concourse *shall be* lamentation,
And in all the highways shall they say, "Woe! woe!" (279)
And they shall call the husbandman to mourning,
And lamentation shall be to all skilful in mourning;
17 And in all the vineyards shall be lamentation;
For I will pass through the midst of thee, saith Jehovah.

18 Woe to those who desire the day of Jehovah!
What will this be to you?
The day of Jehovah *will be* darkness and not light;
19 As when one flees before a lion, and a bear meets him;
Or comes to his house, and leans with his hand on a wall,
And a serpent bites him.
20 Shall not the day of Jehovah be darkness and not light?
And thick darkness and no brightness?

21 I hate, I abhor your festal-days,
And I will not smell at your solemnities;
22 Verily, when ye offer me your burnt-offerings and your gifts,
I will not count them acceptable;
And the peace-offering of your fat things I will not regard.
23 Take away from me the number of thy songs,
And the harmony of thy lyres; I will not hear *them:*
24 And run down as waters shall judgment,
And righteousness as an impetuous torrent. (292)
25 Have ye offered to me sacrifices and an oblation

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In the desert for forty years, O house of Israel?
[26] But ye bore Sicuth, your king, and Chion,
Your images, the stars *being* your gods;
Which ye made for yourselves. (295)
[27] To migrate therefore will I make you beyond Damascus,
Saith Jehovah, the God of Hosts is his name.

CHAPTER VI.

[1] Woe to the secure in Zion,
And to the confident on the mount of Samaria; (302)
Which have been renowned from the beginning of the nations;
And entered in into them has the house of Israel.
[2] Pass ye over into Calneh and see,
Go hence to Hamath the great,
And come down to Gath of the Philistines,
Are they better than these kingdoms?
Is their border larger than your border?

[3] *Woe to you* who drive far off the evil day,
And draw nigh the throne of violence;
[4] Who lie down on beds of ivory,
And extend themselves on their couches;
Who eat lambs from the flock,
And calves from the midst of the stall;
[5] Who sing to the sound of the harp,
And like David invent instruments of music;
[6] Who drink wine in bowls,
And with the chief ointments anoint themselves,
And grieve not for the bruising of Joseph.
[7] They shall now therefore emigrate at the head of the emigrants,
And come shall the mourning of those who extend themselves. (312)

[8] Sworn hath the Lord Jehovah by himself,
Saith Jehovah, the God of hosts,—

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Abhor do I the excellency of Jacob,
And his palaces I regard with hatred,
And I will deliver up the city and its fulness.
9 And it shall be, that when there shall remain
Ten men together in one house, they shall die:
10 And take him shall one's uncle and burn him,
In order to take away his bones from the house,
And shall say to him who shall be at the sides of the house,
"Is there yet any one with thee?"
And he will say, "There is an end;"
Then he shall say, "Be silent,
For it is not for us to remember the name of Jehovah."
11 For, behold, Jehovah commands,
And he will smite the great house with confusions,
And the small house with fissures.

12 Will horses run on a rock?
Will it be ploughed by oxen?
For to gall have ye turned judgment,
And the fruit of righteousness to hemlock;
13 Ye rejoice in a thing of nought, ye say,—
Have we not in our own strength
Raised up for ourselves horns?
14 Behold, I will surely raise against you a nation,
O house of Israel, saith Jehovah, the God of hosts:
And they shall straiten you from the entrance of Hamath
to the river of the plain.

CHAPTER VII.

1 Thus hath the Lord Jehovah showed me,—
Even lo, he formed locusts when grass began to grow,
And, lo, it was the grass after the cuttings of the king:
2 And it was, after they had finished to eat,
That I then said, "Lord Jehovah, spare, I pray;
Who will restore Israel, for he is small?"
3 Jehovah repented of this;
"It shall not be," said Jehovah.

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[4] Thus hath the Lord Jehovah showed me,—
Even lo, the Lord Jehovah called to contend by fire;
And it devoured the great deep and *their* portion:
[5] And I said, "Lord Jehovah, cease, I pray;
Who will restore Israel, for he is small?"
[6] Jehovah repented of this;
"This also shall not be," said the Lord Jehovah.

[7] Thus hath he showed me,—
Even lo, the Lord stood on a plumbline wall,
And in his hand a plumbline,
[8] And Jehovah said to me, "What seest thou, Amos?"
And I said, "A plumbline:"
Then said the Lord, "Behold, I shall set
A plumbline in the midst of my people Israel;
I will no longer pass by them:
[9] And destroyed shall be the high places of Isaac,
And overthrown shall be the sanctuaries of Israel,
And I shall rise up against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."

[10] Then sent Amaziah, the priest of Bethel,
To Jeroboam, king of Israel, saying,—
"Conspired against thee has Amos
In the midst of the house of Israel;
The land cannot bear all his words:
[11] For thus saith Amos,—
'By the sword shall Jeroboam die,
And Israel, by migrating, shall migrate from their own land.'"

[12] Amaziah said also to Amos,—
"Seer, go, flee into the land of Judah,
And there eat bread, and there prophesy:
[13] But in Bethel, prophesy no more;
For it is the king's sanctuary, and the house of the kingdom."
[14] Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah,—
"No Prophet was I, nor was I a Prophet's son,

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For a shepherd I was, and a gatherer of sycamores:
15 But Jehovah took me from after the sheep,
And Jehovah said to me,—
'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'
16 And now hear the word of Jehovah, thou who sayest,—
'Prophesy not concerning Israel,
And speak not concerning the house of Isaac:'
17 Therefore thus saith Jehovah,—
Thy wife in the city shall be prostituted,
And thy sons and thy daughters shall by the sword fall,
And thy land shall by a line be divided,
And thou in a polluted land shalt die,
And Israel, by migrating, shall migrate from their own land."

CHAPTER VIII.

1 Thus hath the Lord Jehovah showed me,—
Even lo, a basket of summer-fruit;
2 And he said, "What seest thou, Amos?"
And I said, "A basket of summer-fruit."
Then Jehovah said to me,—
"Come has the end of my people Israel,
I will no more pass by them."

3 And howlings shall be the songs of the temple
In that day, saith the Lord Jehovah;
Many a dead body, in every place,
Shall be cast down in silence. (362)
4 Hear this, ye who swallow up the poor,
And exterminate the needy of the land, saying,—
5 "When will pass the new moon, that we may sell corn?
And the Sabbath, that we may bring out wheat,
And lessen the ephah, and increase the shekel,
And turn one side the deceitful balances?
6 That we may buy with silver the poor,
And the needy for shoes,
And sell the refuse of corn."

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7 Sworn hath Jehovah by the excellency of Jacob,
"I shall not forget any of their works."
8 Shall not the land be for this in a tumult,
And every one who dwells in it mourn?
Yea, heave up as a river shall the whole of it, (371)
And it shall be driven and sunk as by the river of Egypt.
9 And it shall be in that day, saith the Lord Jehovah,
That I will cause the sun to set at noon,
And will darken the land in a clear day;
10 I will also turn your festal-days to mourning,
And all your songs to lamentation;
And to come up on all loins will I make sackcloth,
And upon every head, baldness;
And I will set her as in mourning for an only son,
And her posterity as in the day of bitterness. (375)

11 Behold, the days are coming, saith Jehovah,
When I shall send a famine on the land,
Not the famine of bread, nor thirst for waters,
But for hearing the words of Jehovah;
12 And they shall wander from sea to sea,
And from the south to the east shall they run,
To seek the word of Jehovah, and shall not find *it:*
13 And in that day shall faint,
The fair virgins and young men, for thirst;
14 Who swear by the sin of Samaria, and who say,—
"Live does thy God, O Dan,
And live does the way of Beersheba;"
And they shall fall and rise again no more.

CHAPTER IX.

1 I saw the Lord standing on the altar, and he said,—
"Smite the lintel, and moved shall be the pillars,
And strike the head of them all;
And the rest of them with the sword shall I slay;
Flee from them shall not he who fleeth,
And escape from them shall not he who escapeth: (385)

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2 If they dig to hell, thence my hand shall bring them out;
And if they ascend to heaven,
I will thence draw them down;
3 And if they hide themselves on the top of Carmel,
There will I search for and draw them forth;
And if they be hid from my eyes in the bottom of the sea,
I will there command the serpent to bite them;
4 And if they go to captivity before their enemies,
I will there command the sword to slay them;
Yea, I will set my eyes on them
For evil, and not for good."
5 And the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, will smite the land,
And it will tremble, and mourn shall all who dwell in it;
And heave up like a river shall the whole of it,
And it shall be sunk as by the river of Egypt.—
6 He who builds his ascendings in the heavens,
And founds his jointings on the earth,
Who calls the waters of the sea,
And pours them on the face of the earth,—
Jehovah is his name. (392-3)

7 Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians to me?
O house of Israel, saith Jehovah;
Did I not make Israel to ascend from Egypt,
And the Philistines from Cappadocia,
And the Syrians from Kir?
8 Behold, the eyes of Jehovah are on *every* wicked kingdom;
And I will destroy it from the face of the earth;
Except that by destroying I shall not destroy
The house of Jacob! saith Jehovah.
9 For, behold, I will command,
And I shall shake the house of Israel among all nations,
As *wheat* is shaken in a sieve,
And fall shall not a grain on the ground:
10 By the sword shall die all the wicked of my people,
Who say, "Draw near and overtake us
Shall not, for our sake, the evil."

11 In that day I will raise up the tent of David,

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That is fallen, and will fence in its breaches,
And its ruins will I raise up;
And I will build it as in ancient days;
12 That possess they may the remnants of Edom,
And all the nations on whom my name shall be called,
Saith Jehovah, the doer of this.

13 Behold, the days are coming, saith Jehovah,
That meet shall the plowman the reaper,
And the treader of grapes the bearer of seed;
And distil shall the mountains sweet wine,
And all the hills shall flow down *with milk*:
14 And I will restore the captivity of my people Israel;
And they shall build wasted cities, and dwell in them;
They shall plant vineyards, and drink their wine;
They shall make gardens, and eat their fruit:
15 And I will plant them in their own land,
And they shall be plucked up no more
From their own land, which I have given to them,
Saith Jehovah, thy God.

END OF NEW TRANSLATION OF AMOS.

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A TRANSLATION

OF

CALVIN'S VERSION

OF

THE PROPHECIES OF OBADIAH.

[1] The vision of Obadiah:

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah against Edom,—
A rumour have we heard from Jehovah,
And a messenger to the nations has been sent,—(423)
"Arise ye, and we shall arise against her to battle."

[2] Lo, small have I set thee among the nations,
Despised greatly wert thou: (425)
[3] The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee,
Who dwellest in the clefts of the rock:
High is his habitation, who says in his heart,
"Who shall draw me down to the ground?"
[4] If thou shouldest rise high as the eagle,
And if among the clouds thou shouldest set thy nest,
Thence shall I draw thee down, saith Jehovah.

[5] Have thieves come to thee, or night-robbers?
How hast thou been reduced to silence?
Have they not stolen what sufficed them?

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Have vintagers come to thee?
Have they not left some clusters?—
6 How much sought out have been the things of Esau,
And thoroughly searched his hidden places!

7 To the border have they driven thee,
All the men of thy confederacy;
Deceived thee, prevailed against thee, have they,
The men who were at peace with thee;
The men who did eat thy bread
Have set a wound under thee:—
There is in him no understanding!

8 Shall I not in that day, saith Jehovah,
Destroy the wise from Edom,
And understanding from the mount of Esau?
Yea, broken down shall be thy valiant ones, O Teman,
9 So that cut off shall be every man,
From the mount of Esau by slaughter.

10 For the oppression of thy brother Jacob,
Cover thee shall reproach,
And thou shalt be cut off for ever.
11 In the day when thou didst stand on the other side,
In the day when aliens took away his substance,
And foreigners entered his gates,
And on Jerusalem did cast lots,
Even thou wert as one of them.
12 But thou shouldest not look on in the day of thy brother,
In the day of his alienation;
Nor shouldest rejoice over the children of Judah,
In the day of their destruction;
Nor speak with thy mouth proud things,
In the day of distress;
13 Nor shouldest thou enter the gate of my people,
In the day of their destruction;
Nor look on him, especially thou, in his distress,
In the day of his destruction;
Nor stretch *thy hand* to his substance,

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In the day of his destruction:
14 Nor shouldest thou stand on the outlets,
To destroy those who were escaping;
Nor deliver up his remnants in the day of distress.

15 Seeing that near is the day of Jehovah on all nations,
As thou hast done, it shall be done to thee,
Thy reward shall be returned on thine own head:
16 For as ye have drunk on my holy mountain,
Drink shall all nations continually;
They shall drink and drink up;
And they shall be as though they never had been.

17 But in mount Zion shall be deliverance,
And *Zion* shall be holiness;
And possess shall the house of Jacob their own possessions:
18 The house of Jacob shall be also a fire,
And the house of Joseph a flame,
And the house of Esau shall be chaff;
And kindled they shall be among them, and consume them;
And no remnant shall be to the house of Esau;
For *thus* hath Jehovah spoken.
19 They shall also possess the south of the mount of Esau,
And the plain, even *that* of the Philistines;
And they shall possess the fields of Ephraim
And the fields of Samaria,
And Benjamin *shall possess* Gilead:
20 And the emigrants of this host of the children of Israel
Shall possess *the land* of the Canaanites to Zarephath;
And the emigrants of Jerusalem, what is in Sepharad,
Even the southern cities: (451)
21 And ascend shall saviours to mount Zion,
To judge the mount of Esau;
And Jehovah's shall be the kingdom.

END OF NEW TRANSLATION OF OBADIAH.

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ADDENDA

TO THE

FIRST AND SECOND VOLUMES

OF

CALVIN'S COMMENTARIES

ON THE

TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS.

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ADDENDA.

VOLUME FIRST.

Hos. i. 2, *Take to thee a wife*, &c., p. 43. Whether the marriage of the Prophet was a real transaction or not, has been a subject much controverted by the learned. Bishop Horsley, in his Introduction to his New Translation of Hosea, defends, with his usual ability, the opinion that it was a real marriage. Dr Henderson, in his work on the Minor Prophets, takes the same view. The strongest point in favour of the opposite sentiment, that it was a kind of a parabolic representation, is the command, similar to this, which is given to the Prophet in the third chapter; and to this Calvin especially alludes. Though the latter command is similar, yet it materially differs in many circumstances; and the design of the transaction is wholly different.

The reason for what is commanded is given in both instances. The first marriage was to represent the defection of this people from God, because "by wantoning the land had grown wanton, that it did not follow Jehovah." The second contract (for it was no marriage) was to set forth "the love of Jehovah towards the children of Israel."

There seems to be no ground for the opinion, that the first wife, Gomer, is "the woman" mentioned in the third chapter, who, having been repudiated for her incontinence, was again to be restored. The dowry which the Prophet is said to have given for her, according to the usual manner of

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those times, clearly shows that it was a new engagement, and not the renewal of a former union. What Dr Henderson states in favour of what he thinks to have been a re-union, seems to be of no force. The command, he says, is different; it is not "take," but "love." The evident reason for this difference is, that it was no marriage but a contract for marriage, as the sequel evidently proves: he "bought" her, she was to "abide" for him, she was not to be for another, and he promised to be for her.

The evident design of the first marriage, whether real or not, was to represent the state of the people at that time, in their idolatry, and the ruinous consequences of that idolatry. The evident design of what is recorded in the third chapter, as Calvin states at large, was to set forth the dealings of God with the people during their exile. As the latter transaction bears much the appearance of a parable, we may reasonably conclude that the first was of the same character.

It may be added, that *Marckius*, who wrote largely and learnedly on the Minor Prophets, maintains that "children of wantonness," or of fornications, do not mean spurious children, but those addicted to wantonness; as in the case of the mother, who was not called a woman of fornications because of her birth, but of her lewd conduct. The children, then, were thus called prospectively; that is, with regard to what they would be. Now, if this be true as to the children, the question may be asked, Was not this also the case with the mother; that is, was not she called prospectively "a wife of fornications?" This would certainly be a correcter emblem of the state of the people, who had become idolaters, after God as it were married them, or entered into covenant with them.

Hos. i. 6, *I will take them away*, p. 56. In confirmation of the note on this place, the following texts are adduced:—Gen. xviii. 26; l. 17; Exod. xxiii. 21; Num. xiv. 19; Jos. xxiv. 19; Ps. xxv. 18; xcix. 8; Isa. ii. 9. These are *all* the instances in which the verb נשׂא is followed by ל, without an objective case: and it means invariably to forgive, and not to take away. And the last text in Isaiah has nearly

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the very words of this passage, ולא־תשא להם, "and forgive them not."

Hos. ii. 11, *Her new moon*, &c., p. 97. It is the character of poetry to use the singular number in a collective sense; her new moon, not her new moons. Several instances of this we meet with in this chapter: "her vine and her fig-tree" —"her ear-ring and her chain"—"the bird of heaven and the reptile of the earth,"—all these, though in the singular number, are to be understood as including multiplicity. Calvin retains this poetic character of the original. It would have been better if it had been retained in all translations.

Hos. iii. 4, *Without a statue*, &c., p. 130. "If I may offer a conjecture concerning the difference between these idolatrous statues and teraphim, I would say, that the statues were of large dimensions, set up in public, as objects of popular adoration, [as crucifixes, &c., in Popish countries:] the teraphim were of a smaller size, and for different purposes; kept in the most secret recesses of the temples or consecrated chapels, for magical rites, and rarely, if ever, exposed to public view.

"Thus, since it appears that both the statue and teraphim of Hosea were implements of idolatry, no doubt can remain, that the *ephod*, which is mentioned between the two, is to be understood of the idolatrous ephod, not that which belonged to the holy vestments of the high priest. As it is put between the statue and the teraphim, it may seem, that it may be connected with either: connected with the statue, it will denote the robe with which the idol was clothed: connected with the teraphim, the ephod of the priest of the teraphim. And in this connection (to which, indeed, the structure of the sentence in the original seems to point in preference) I would choose to take it. For thus we shall have idolatry described by the three principal features in its external appearance,—the statue, the public object of popular adoration,—the teraphim, the images of the more secret rites of incantation,—and the sorcerer, or hierophant, conducting the ceremonies, and propounding to the consultors of the oracle the

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answers he pretended to receive, represented by the ephod, the most remarkable of his robes of office."—BISHOP HORSLEY.

Hos. iv. 8, *To iniquity they lift up the heart of each*, p. 154. Probably the words are not correctly rendered according to the exposition given by Calvin. As he explains them in page 156, *As to iniquity*, would be perhaps the best rendering; for his comment is, "that the priests lifted up the soul of each by relieving their consciences by soothing words of flattery." However true this may have been, yet the meaning of this sentence is, I believe, what I have stated in a note. The rendering I have given removes the anomalies of persons which Calvin notices. The persons who did eat or feed on the sin of the people were evidently the priests, and they were those who raised or lifted up the heart or mind of the people. The affix, *their*, to iniquity, refers to the priests, and the affix, *his*, to the heart or mind, refers to the people, and ought to be rendered, *their*, in our language. Some copies have *their* appended to the word, נפשם; but this, I have no doubt, has been an attempt, as in other instances, to correct what appeared to be an anomaly. *Dr Henderson* renders the line, "And long for their iniquity," and adds in a note, that נשא נפש, *to lift up the animal soul* for any thing, means to *lust after it*, long or have a strong desire for it. It has no doubt this meaning; but it means also, to raise up, or guide, or direct the soul, including the mind, the attention, and affections, to an object. The phrase is included, with all its accompaniments, the verb, an objective case, and the preposition אל or אלי, in the following sentence, אליך יהוה נפשי אשא, 'To thee, Jehovah, my soul I lift up,' Psal. xxv. 1. See Psal. lxxxvi. 4.

Hos. iv. 18, *Putrid is become their drink*, p. 177. *Newcome* reads, "He is gone after their wine," that is, of idols. But this rendering cannot be admitted, as it gives a sense to סר which it nowhere has. *Horsley* renders thus,—"Their strong drink is vapid;" and has this note,—"The allusion is to libations made with wine grown dead or turning sour. The

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image represents the want of all spirit of piety in their acts of worship, and the unacceptableness of such worship before God: which is alleged as a reason for the determination expressed in the preceding clause, to give Ephraim up to his own ways. "Leave him to himself," says God to the Prophet, "his pretended devotions are all false and hypocritical, I desire none of them." *Henderson's* rendering is new, but seems unsuitable to the text,—"When their carousal is over, they indulge in lewdness." What appears to comport best with the words and with the context, is what is given by *Dathius*, "compotationes eos seduxerunt,"—drinkings have seduced them. He takes סוּר in a causative sense. Then the literal version of סוּר סִבְאָם would be, "Turned *them* aside, or seduced *them*, has their strong drink." Drunkenness was ascribed to them in verse 11. If this be the meaning, then we have in this verse three of the prevailing sins of the people —drunkenness—fornication, that is, idolatry—and bribery.

With regard to the remaining portion of the verse, both *Newcome* and *Henderson* have taken such liberties in clipping and in changing the order of the words, that their versions are wholly inadmissible. Where there is a meaning, and a striking one too, this liberty is by no means to be allowed. Horsley's version substantially agrees with that of Calvin; and it is this, "Given up to lasciviousness, greedy of gain, (O shame!) are her great men." The parenthetic expression, "O shame!" had been previously suggested by *Drusius*. "For a long time," says the Bishop, "I thought myself original and single in this way of rendering: but I have the satisfaction to find, that the learned Drusius was before me in it. He renders thus,—'Scortando scortati sunt, amant date (O dedecus) protectores ejus.'" This is certainly a very literal rendering of the original,—

הזנה הזנו
אהבו הבו קלון מגניה
Wantoning they have become wanton,
'Bring ye,' (O shame!) do her protectors love.

Hos. v. 1, *A net expanded over Tabor*, p. 181. Striking are the words of *Bishop Horsley* in connection with this pass-

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age,—"The toils and nets are whatever, in the external form of idolatry, was calculated to captivate the minds of men; magnificent temples, stately altars, images richly adorned, the gaiety of festivals, the pomp, and in many instances, even the horror of public rites."

Hos. vi. 5, *Thy judgments*, &c., p. 229. *Henderson* thinks that judgments here are to be viewed in the sense of punishments, and that "thy judgments" mean those alluded to and deserved by Ephraim. That this mode of speaking is not unusual in Hebrew, is no doubt true. But the word here used, commonly rendered judgments, is one of very wide meaning. It signifies not only the sentence pronounced on the criminal, but also the sentence pronounced by God as to what is right or wrong. The latter is very frequently its meaning. Moses speaks of statutes and judgments, מִשְׁפָּטִים, which the Israelites were to "do," or observe and keep, (Deut. iv. 14.) The Psalmist prays God to teach him his judgments, (Ps. cxix. 108.) Hence precepts, as Horsley renders it, suitably express the meaning. Then "thy" means given to thee, revealed and communicated to thee. The expression, "thy judgments," admits then no doubt of either of these two meanings. The question is, which of the two is the most suitable to the rest of the sentence, and to the context? To compare inflicted judgments to light going forth, appears not certainly very appropriate; but when the clear teaching of God's word as to what is right, and just, and equitable, is compared to out-spreading light, there is a striking suitableness. And then the context seems to favour this view.

Hos. vi. 9, *By consent*, &c., p. 238. *Newcome*, *Horsley*, and others, render the line thus, "A company of priests murder *in* the way to Shechem," taking שְׁכֶמָה, a shoulder, taken figuratively for consent, as the name of a place. But by this rendering they change the order of the words: דֶּרֶךְ, the way, is before the verb to murder, and cannot be construed "in the way to Shechem." Besides, the following line confirms the rendering of Calvin; for what they are said to do

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is זמה, a device, a conceived wickedness, or a concerted scheme, which seems to imply a consent.

Hos. vi. 11, *Judah also did set a plant for thee*, p. 240. There is much difference in the meaning attached to this line. The foregoing is certainly its most literal rendering, except that for "plant" some would substitute "harvest:" but the word means both. In all other versions there is something that seems forced. Some then disjoin the next line from this, and connect it with the first verse of the following chapter, and mainly because they cannot see its meaning as connected with this. Now it appears to me, that by this arrangement a confusion is introduced. It must be borne in mind that this section commences in verse 4, in which both Ephraim and Judah are mentioned: but, in the next chapter, Israel or Ephraim is alone spoken of throughout. Hence, to begin the next chapter by introducing Judah, which is evidently meant by "my people," while the whole chapter refers only to Ephraim, is certainly not to produce order, but rather disorder. The connection of the line with the preceding one is, in my view, made sufficiently clear by Calvin,—that while God was restoring, or endeavouring to restore, the captivity, the dispersed state of his people, (for many of them were taken captives by the neighbouring nations long before their final captivity,)—while God was doing this, Judah was engaged in setting the plant of idolatry in the land; and he is said to do this "for thee," that is, for Ephraim, to further as it were, and assist Ephraim in his idolatry.

The Prophet is supposed to allude to what is recorded in 2 Chron. xxviii. And there we see Jewish captives restored, and Ahaz, the king of Judah, was at the same time introducing idolatry into the land: he was making, as it were, a large plantation; for he made "molten images," and "sacrificed to the gods of Damascus."

Hos. ix. 8, *The watchman of Ephraim*, &c., p. 327. The objection to this, because Ephraim is not in construction in the original with watchman, is not valid; for the latter word is a participle, and used as a personal noun, as is often the

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case in Hebrew. Literally, it is, "He who watcheth Ephraim." The rendering of Henderson is far-fetched, and irrelevant, as there is nothing in the context which justifies it. It is this,—"Ephraim expecteth help from my God." To translate צופה, "expecteth help," is without any example. The references, Ps. v. 4, and Lam. iv. 17, do not bear out the meaning. Besides, the common usage in Hebrew is, when a participle is employed as a verb to express the present time, the auxiliary verb being understood, that it follows the nominative case, and does not precede it as here. It is quite clear that the "watchman" and "the Prophet" is the same, and that he is described "as a snare of the fowler in all his ways." The only difficulty is in the words, עִם־אֱלֹהָי, "with my God." If not construed with Prophet, as I have proposed in my note, it may be appended to the first line, and עִם may be rendered "before," or, "in the presence of," as in 1 Sam. ii. 21, where it is said that Samuel grew עִם־יְהוָה, "before Jehovah." *Grotius* suggests that עִם here may be taken for people; and so it may, for the punctuists alone have made it especially a preposition. Then it would be, "the people of my God," a designation of Ephraim according to God's adoption and their own profession, notwithstanding their idolatry. The meaning still would be nearly the same, for the false prophet, as well as the people, professed God's name, and claimed to be a Prophet before God: and by this means especially were the people deluded. Satan is never so dangerous as when he pretends to be the angel of light—a servant of God, and an advocate of idolatry—a Prophet in the presence of God, and a fowler to catch men, and to draw them into superstition.

Hos. x. 4, *Judgment grows up*, &c., p. 356. Though I gave in a note a view of this sentence different from that of Calvin, yet on looking on the original, I find that the order of the words favours his view. Rendered according to the order of the words, it is this—

And germinate like wormwood does judgment on the furrows of the field.

By judgment Calvin means religious conduct; I take it to

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be the administration of justice; but *Dr Henderson*, with *Grotius* and others, considers it to be punishment, inflicted on the people, which seems not suitable either to the comparison or to the context. *Newcome's* explanation is, "In these times of confusion, judgment has changed its nature, and has become destructive." The passage in Amos vi. 12, seems to determine the meaning here. "Judicium hîc accipio pro impia gubernatione principum Israelis, maximè in jure dicendo: quæ judicia, cum deberent esse salutaria et grata, acerba et amara fiunt et hominibus perniciosa."—*Rivetus*, quoted by Poole.

Hos. x. 9, *There they stood*, p. 369. It ought, perhaps, to be, "There they have stood, (steterunt;") that is, they have continued the same, perverse and corrupt. *Horsley* says, "They stood;" that is, the Israelites set themselves in array for the attack: which, in this connection, seems to have no meaning. *Henderson* considers the Gibeonites to be meant, "There they remain," that is, the same in character as at this day: but this view, no less than the former, seems foreign to the context.

In the next line *Newcome* and *Boothroyd*, with several others, following the conjecture of *Houbigant*, without the countenance of any MS., guided only by a hint given in the Septuagint, make a considerable alteration. They separate the end of the ninth verse, and join it to the beginning of the tenth. The dismembered line and the newly-formed one are thus given,—

> "Did not the war overtake them in Gibeah?
> I came against the sons of iniquity and chastised them."

The first word in ver. 10 is changed; בְּאַוָּתִי is put for בְּאַוָּתִי. Both *Horsley* and *Henderson* very justly reject this emendation.

Hos. x. 15, *Thus shall Bethel do to you*, p. 384. *Horsley* gives the same rendering. *Newcome*, on the mere authority of the Septuagint, changes the whole sentence, "*Thus shall* it be done unto you, O house of Israel." No less frigid and incon-

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sistent with the words in Hebrew is the version of *Henderson*, "Thus shall he act towards you at Bethel." The comment of Calvin shows the remarkably striking import of this sentence.

Hos. xi. 7, *To him on high they call them*, &c., p. 399. *Rivetus*, as quoted in *Poole's* Syn., gives a very different rendering of this clause. In commenting on the Vulgate, which has this version—"Jugum autem imponetur eis simul, quod non auferetur—but a yoke will be laid on them together, which shall not be taken away," *Rivetus* says, that nothing opposes this meaning, except that the Hebrews say that עַל here does not mean a yoke, but the high one, that is, God. But the same word, without the ו, which it commonly has, when it means a yoke, occurs in ver. 4: and there seems to be an allusion here to what is said there; as there is in the verb יִקְרָא to what is expressed in ver. 2. The yoke is considered to be that of captivity. God called them by his prophets to himself, as it is said in the second verse; they turned away from God, yet God continued his kindness, and when they were distressed, he raised up the yoke, that is, relieved them: but now, they being bent on defection, he threatens them with subjugation to a foreign power, and withdraws every hope of relief. Taking this view, we might render the words thus,—

> Therefore to the yoke he will call them together;
> He will not raise *it* up;

Or, as Rivetus proposes,

> None will raise it up.

Not only is this a literal rendering, but it fits in remarkably with the following as well as with the previous context. The exclamation which follows naturally flows from this denunciation of judgment. The version of Newcome is somewhat like this, but not so literal nor so suitable to the context,—

> And *though* they call on him together because of the yoke, he will not raise *it*.

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Hos. xi. 10, 11, *After Jehovah shall they walk*, &c., p. 407. *Calvin* differs from most, if not from all, commentators, as to the meaning of these two verses. It is said that Jehovah "will roar as a lion." This roaring will cause trembling,—to whom? Most say, to the children of Israel; but *Calvin* says, to their enemies. But in order to avoid the evident incongruity of applying trembling to the Israelites, the meaning of hastening has been given to the verb חָרַד, which it is said to have only here and in 2 Kings iv. 13, its general import being that of trembling or shaking with fear. The Septuagint favours this latter idea, ἐκστησονται—shall be astounded; and "children from the west" is rendered τεκνα ὑδατων—children of the waters, or, according to another copy, υἱοι θαλασσης—sons of the sea. The Israelites were not thus designated, but their enemies. But no doubt the last clause has occasioned this mistake, which, according to our version, is, "I will place them in their houses;" which may be rendered, "I will cause them to sit still on (that is, the top or roof of) their houses:" for it is not *in*, but *on*, עַל. The flat roofs of the east were places to which people in fear would likely betake themselves.

Bishop Horsley has here a beautiful disquisition on the progress of the Gospel; he takes roaring for preaching, a singular notion. "The roaring," he says, "is unquestionably the sound of the Gospel. Jehovah himself shall roar: the sound shall begin to be uttered by the voice of the incarnate God himself. The first effect shall be, that children shall come fluttering from the west, a new race of children, converts of the Gentiles, chiefly from the western quarters of the world;—afterwards the natural Israel shall hurry from all the regions of their dispersion, and be settled in their own dwellings," &c., &c. Though all this is very fine, it has nothing to do with this passage. Speaking of this roaring being applied to the preaching of the Gospel, *Calvin* says, "This and the like are refinements of which I think the Prophet never thought."

Hos. xi. 12, *But Judah as yet rules with his God*, &c., p. 409. Notwithstanding what modern critics have said on

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this verse, the rendering of *Calvin*, which as to the first line is adopted by *Horsley*, seems the most natural, and the most literal. *Newcome* mangles the whole text, assisted by the Septuagint, the Syriac, and Arabic versions, and the Vulgate. *Henderson*, following *Dathius*, *Boothroyd*, and others, affixes a new idea to רד, supported, as they say, by the following texts: Jer. ii. 31; Gen. xxvii. 40; and Ps. lv. 3. There are no other examples, except that the word occurs, as it is thought, in the form of a noun in Lam. i. 7; iii. 19. Now, in none of these places is there any thing *decisive* in favour of the meaning attached to it in the following version,—

"And as for Judah he is still inconstant with God."

It is said that the word includes the ideas of being *unfaithful*, *rebelling*, *wandering at large*. Much stronger and clearer examples must be adduced before this meaning can be received. It is always suspicious when any thing doubtful or far-fetched is brought forward to explain a text. The meaning of ruling with or before God, as explained by *Calvin* and by others, such as *Rivetus*, seems quite satisfactory, and obviates the difficulty felt by *Dathius* and others, and which obviously induced them to seek a new interpretation.

With regard to the other line, *And together with the saints he is faithful*, I find no improvement, but otherwise.

Newcome's version of the whole verse is this,—

"Ephraim hath compassed me about with falsehood,
And the house of Israel and of Judah with deceit;
But hereafter they shall come down a people of God,
Even a faithful people of saints."

Henderson's is the following,—

"Ephraim hath encompassed me with falsehood,
And the house of Israel with deceit;
And as for Judah, he is still inconstant with God,
Even with the faithful holy ones."

So various become versions, when once a license is taken with the text, or with the current meaning of words. *Junius*

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and *Tremelius* agree with *Calvin*, except as to time, the past tense is adopted. The last two lines are thus given,—

> "Quando Jehudah adhuc dominabatur cum *Deo* forti,
> Et cum sanctis fidelis erat."

The whole verse, according to this version, is as follows,—

> "Surround me did the Ephraimites with falsehood,
> And with guile, the house of Israel;
> When Judah as yet ruled with God,
> And with the saints was faithful."

By referring to past times, the objection as to the condition of Judah, he being at that time much given to superstition and idolatry, though still adhering to the outward form of true worship, is to a great extent removed. But the remarks of *Calvin* on this point seem sufficient.

Hos. xii. 8, *In all my labours*, &c., p. 435. *Newcome's* version is very different, he having been led astray, as usual, by the Septuagint,—

> "All his labours shall not be found *profitable* unto him,
> *For* the iniquity wherewith he hath sinned."

Horsley's rendering is nearly as far from the Original as this—"All my labours procured not for me what may expiate iniquity." *Henderson's* version is a paraphrase, but materially agrees with that of *Calvin*,—

> "In none of my labours am I chargeable with guilt."

What he considers the literal rendering is this—"With respect to all my efforts, they shall not find attaching to me iniquity which is sin." Perhaps the words may admit of a still more literal rendering—"All my labours shall not be found *to be* an iniquity to me, that *is* a sin."

Hos. xii. 11, *Is there iniquity in Gilead?* p. 441. There is considerable difficulty connected with this passage, and, indeed, with the whole of this chapter, from the eighth verse to the end. The main drift is evidently what is stated by

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Calvin, and in this most commentators agree. It was clearly the design of the Prophet, in alluding to Jacob and his history, to prove the ingratitude and to beat down the pride of Ephraim. But still, to connect the whole together in a continuous narrative, is no easy task. On this very line there is a great variety. *Grotius* reads, "Si in Galaade idolum fuit;" *Junius* and *Tremelius*, "An in Gilhade iniquitas?" *Horsley*, "Was there idolatry in Gilead?" *Newcome*, "Verily *in* Gilead *there is* iniquity;" and *Henderson*, "Verily Gilead is iniquitous."

It appears that Gilead was at this time destroyed; for what is said in 2 Kings xv. 29, was evidently previous to the time of Hosea. It is there stated that the king of Assyria had taken Gilead, with other cities, and carried the inhabitants captive to Assyria.[1] The reference, then, to Gilead, must have been to its former state. Gilgal being still in the possession of Israel, its state at that time is described. This shows that *Grotius* and *Horsley* are more correct than *Calvin*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson*. Gilead is evidently introduced as an instance of the effects of idolatry, and the folly of Israel is exposed in continuing the same idolatry at Gilgal. That I may attempt to exhibit the whole passage from verse eighth to the end, in a connected form, I submit to the reader the following version,—

8. Canaan *is he!*[2] in his hand are the balances of deceit;
   He loves to oppress:
9. Yet Ephraim says, "Surely I am become rich,
   I have found substance for myself;
   In all my labours they will not find against me
   An iniquity that *is* a sin."
10. But I, Jehovah, thy God from the land of Egypt,
   Will yet make thee to dwell in tents,

[1] "Do ye think that there was more iniquity in the Gileadites, that are already carried away captive, than in you? Surely the rest of Israel is in the same case; they all lie open to the same judgment. . . . They sacrifice to their idols in Gilgal also."—*Bishop Hall*, quoted by *Scott*.

[2] "God says to the Prophet, Instead of turning to me and keeping to works of charity and justice, he is a mere heathen huckster. Thou hast miscalled him Jacob; he is Canaan; not Jacob, the godly, the heir of the promise; [but] Canaan, the cheat, the son of the curse."—*Bishop Horsley*.

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As in the days of meeting:[1]
11. Thus have I spoken by the prophets,
When I had visions multiplied,
And by the prophets showed similitudes.
12. If Gilead *has been* iniquitous, (*literally*, iniquity;)
Surely vain have they become in Gilgal;
They sacrifice oxen, yea their altars
Are like the heaps on the furrows of the field.
13. When Jacob fled to the land of Aram,
Then Israel served for a wife,
And for a wife he kept *sheep;*
By a prophet also did Jehovah bring Israel from Egypt,
And by a prophet was he preserved.
14. *Yet* Ephraim has caused the bitterest provocation:
But his blood on himself shall be left,
And his reproach will his Lord return to him.

Hos. xiii. 2, *Who sacrifice men*, &c., p. 453. *Henderson*, after mentioning several authors for and against this rendering, strengthens his own, which agrees with our common version, by referring to a rule of syntax laid down by Gesenius; but that rule refers to adjectives and to passive participles, according to the instances given, and not to participles, as in the present case, in an active form. The words here are literally "the sacrificers of men," which certainly can never mean the men who sacrifice. The words are not in apposition but *in regimine*. We have in Deut. xviii. 3, זבחי הזבח, "the sacrificers of the sacrifice," a phrase similar to the present.

Hos. xiii. 14, *From the power of the grave would I redeem thee*, &c., p. 476. The conditional form is adopted by *Grotius* and others, but disapproved by *Horsley*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson*. When we consider what precedes this verse, and what follows it, the condition seems the most suitable. Then the expression, "repentance is hid from my eyes," appears

[1] This refers to the meeting or assembling of the people in the wilderness to the tabernacle. The tabernacle was called אהל מועד, the tabernacle of meeting, the very word used here. See Exod. xxv. 22; xxx. 36. But if מועד ימי designate the days of the annual feast of tabernacles, yet they must be viewed here, as Scott says, with reference only to the manner in which they lived in the wilderness.

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more consistent with a threatening than with a promise, especially as the threatening is continued in the next verse. To repent of evil, and not of good, is the phrase usually found in the Old Testament. It is true that Paul makes use of the expression with regard to the gifts of God, (Rom. xi. 29,) but the context here seems to favour the other notion.

Hos. xiv. 2, *Bring good,* p. 488. *Horsley* reads, "Accept the good;" *Newcome,* "Let us receive good;" *Henderson,* "Graciously receive us."[1] The words are וקח־טוב, literally, "and receive," or "bring good." The verb means simply to "take;" but then it is used to express taking for one's self in the sense of receiving, and taking for another in the sense of bringing. Naaman said to Elisha, קח נא ברכה, "Take," or "receive, I pray, a blessing," 2 Kings v. 15; and Jacob said to Joseph, קחם־נא אלי, "Take," or "bring them, I pray, to me," Gen. xlviii. 9. See also Gen. xv. 9; 2 Kings ii. 20. So the meaning may be either that given by *Horsley* or by *Calvin;* and as the latter is more consonant with the passage, and does not blend in sense, as the former does, with the next clause in the verse, it ought to be preferred. But the Bishop's note must be added,—"*Take away all iniquity, i. e.,* Take away entirely the sinful principle within us. Take away the carnal heart of the old Adam. *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.* And then, when we are thus begotten again unto holiness by thy Spirit, *accept the good,* accept as good, what, so regenerate, we shall be enabled to perform." All this is perfectly true; but the former part is not an explanation of the text; for to *take away sin* does not mean the renewal of the heart, but the forgiveness of sin. Though they be two gracious acts which go together, they are yet wholly separate and distinct; and to confound them may lead to serious mistakes.

The same verb is used at the beginning of the verse, *Take,*

[1] The Doctor says, that *Horsley* is wrong in his philology in this instance, and adds, that טוב is used adverbially. No instance is given; and it is difficult to find one. Let it be adduced, and then the philological accurateness of this rendering shall be allowed. The fact is, that in Hebrew very few words of this kind are taken adverbially: the language deals very sparingly in adverbs.—*Ed.*

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or bring *with you words*. As they were to bring words of confession and prayer, so God is solicited to *bring good;* and to bring good very suitably follows the taking away of iniquity; and then follows the gratitude that is required.

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Joel i. 4, *The residue of the locusts*, &c., p. 20. "A comparison," says Dr Henderson, "of the different passages in which these names occur, renders it more than probable that they are here employed by the Prophet, not with any reference to the species into which the locusts may be scientifically divided, but to designate four successive swarms, according to certain destructive qualities, by which, as a genus of insects, they are distinguished, and thereby to heighten the terror which this description was intended to produce."

Mercerius, as quoted in Poli Syn., tells us, that almost all divines, both ancient and modern, understood this narrative of the locusts allegorically; and it appears that, according to some, they designate the four incursions of the Chaldeans into the land, that is, by Tiglathpileser, Shalmanezer, Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar; or, according to Cyril, by Shalmanezer, Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus, and the Romans; or, according to Jerome, the four empires which successively ruled over the Jews, the first locust representing the Chaldeans,—the second, the Medes and Persians,—the third, the Macedonians, —and the fourth, the Romans. But these are hallucinations and not expositions. Much more appropriate is the opinion stated and approved by *Henderson*, that in this chapter Joel describes a devastation of the country by natural locusts; and that in the second he predicts a devastation by the Assyrians in a language highly metaphorical, borrowed in some measure from the scene described here; and this is exactly the view of *Calvin*.

Joel ii. 12, *But even now*, &c., p. 55. Our version,

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"Therefore also now," is not so emphatical as that of *Calvin*. The full meaning has been perceived by *Newcome*, "Yet even now," though omitted by *Henderson*, whose rendering is, "Now therefore," which comes short of our common version.

Joel ii. 13, *For he is propitious*, &c., p. 60. It is of great importance that this declaration of what God is should be correctly rendered. *Newcome's* version is the same with our common translation. Henderson's is different; it is this,—

> "For he is pitiful and compassionate,
> Long-suffering and of great mercy,
> And repenteth of the evil."

The first, חנון, is not "pitiful," but gracious, benevolent, propitious, gratuitously kind, favourable to the undeserving; it comes from חן, to show favour or kindness; and the last letter being doubled, it may be rendered, very kind, or very gracious. The second is רחום, which more properly means pitiful, but rightly rendered, "compassionate," rather than "merciful," as in our version. The third, ארך אפים, is better expressed by "slow to anger," or to wrath, than by "long-suffering." The fourth is, רב־חסד, much, or abundant in goodness: the word חסד is sometimes rendered mercy, but not properly; it means overflowing goodness, or exuberant benevolence. *Adam Clarke* has given an accurate description of these terms:—"*gracious*—good and benevolent in his own nature,—*merciful*—pitying and forgiving,—*slow to anger*—not easily provoked to punish,—*of great kindness*—exuberant goodness to all them who return to him."

Joel ii. 14, *Who knows*, &c., p. 63. *Henderson* has been very felicitous in his version of this line,—

> "Who knoweth? He may turn and repent."

It is an instance of the potential or subjunctive meaning of the future tense in Hebrew; which is the case probably much oftener than what is generally thought. But not so felicitous is the rendering of חוסה, in verse 17, by "Have pity." The meaning of the verb is, no doubt, to spare, as it is rendered, I

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believe, uniformly in our version. It may be seen in connection with two other verbs, which include the ideas of pity and sympathy, in Jer. xiii. 14; xxi. 7.

Joel ii. 20, *For high hath he exalted himself to do his purpose*, p. 79. Both *Newcome* and *Henderson* retain the common version, only the former reads, "Though," instead of "because he hath done great things." כי הגדיל לעשות, "For he made himself great in (or, by) doing," or, "became great in doing." It is the greatness of the doer that is set forth, rather than of the things done. *Henderson* very justly observes, that those words "convey the idea of moral agency, and can with no propriety be interpreted of the locusts." Exactly the same words are adopted in the next verse in reference to God.

Joel ii. 25, *My great army*, &c., p. 85. *Newcome* says, "We have here a key to the grand and beautiful description which runs through these two chapters." He considered that the Prophet is to be understood throughout "as foretelling a plague of locusts." But this can be no key to such an interpretation, for what is said in this verse coalesces much better with the other view. On the supposition that there *had* been locusts, as related in the first chapter, and that the Prophet threatens a heavier judgment in this, which could only be prevented by repentance, to which he exhorts them, it appears most appropriate for him to say, that not only "the North-lander," of whose invasion he had spoken, would be driven away and destroyed, but that also the devastations already produced by the locusts would be repaired. So far then is this verse from being a key to the proposed interpretation, that it is much more suitable to the other.

Joel ii. 30, *And I will set prodigies*, &c., p. 100. *Calvin* extends the range of these prodigies beyond what most commentators do. They are viewed by most as those prodigies, recorded even by the historian Josephus, which preceded the overthrow of the city and the temple by the

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Romans, when the whole kingdom, in a civil and ecclesiastical sense, was completely abolished. *The day of the Lord*, as mentioned here, has therefore been regarded as the day or time when this awful calamity happened to the Jews: but *Calvin* regards it as the day of final judgment. There is no doubt much truth in what he says about prodigies or awful judgments ever accompanying the gospel, not as its effects, but as visitations for unbelief, and wilful and malicious opposition to it. There is much in the history of the world in confirmation of what he advances. The determinate suppression of the gospel by those who had opportunity of knowing it, or the evident depravation of it either by the influence of infidelity or of superstition, have often been visited in this world with awful judgments, such as wars and political disturbances.

Amos ii. 7, *Who pant*, &c., p. 182. Our common version is the literal one, which is followed by *Henderson*, but altered for the worse by *Newcome*, who was led astray by Houbigant and the Septuagint. Not only are the words inverted, but a change is made in the verb, without the authority of any MS. It is a strong mode of expression to set forth the extreme cruelty and avariciousness of the persons referred to. "They even begrudged them," as Henderson observes, "the small quantity of dust they had cast on their heads in token of mourning:" or, as *Parkhurst* says, They "*longed* to see the poor and miserable still more wretched: a most diabolical character surely!" To cast dust on the head was then customary in seasons of great distress. See Job ii. 12; Ezek. xxvii. 30; and 2 Sam. xiii. 19.

Amos iii. 5, *Will a bird fall into a snare on the earth without a fowler?* &c., p. 203. *Newcome*, with whom *Henderson* materially agrees, renders this verse differently,—

> "Can a bird fall into a snare upon the earth,
> Where no gin *is set* for him?
> Will a snare spring from the ground,
> When it hath not taken *anything*?"

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The comparison is more appropriate according to the version of Calvin; and the probability is that it is the right one. The word מוקש, rendered "gin" by *Newcome*, as it is in our version, is considered by *Henderson* as redundant; and this very circumstance creates a suspicion that the passage is not rightly understood. This word is often rendered in our version "snare," but it means more properly the act, ensnaring, than the instrument, snare: and it may be considered here a Hiphil participle—"he who ensnares," or, "the ensnarer." It is rendered ἰξευτης, a bird-catcher, by the Septuagint. Then the two following lines will admit naturally of Calvin's rendering, and there will be no need of having recourse to *Henderson's* "elastic snare," or to *Adam Clarke's* "spring-trap," neither of which is, I believe, intended by the word פח, which signifies a snare spread out, or an expanded net. See Job xviii. 9; Ps. cxl. 5; cxlii. 3.

Amos iv. 3, *And ye shall cast yourselves down from the palace*, p. 228. This difficult line is variously rendered. *Dathius* renders it, "To Armenia shall ye be led away;" *Newcome*, following *Houbigant*, who always mends the text, "And I will cast it forth, and will utterly destroy it;" *Henderson*, "Ye shall be even thrown out of the palace;" and *Horsley*, following *Parkhurst*, "And ye shall be thrown into the shambles." The whole difficulty lies in the word ההרמונה, found only here. The idea of shambles agrees well with the context, in which cows are mentioned. *Parkhurst*, after *Schultens*, derives it from הרם, not found in Hebrew as a verb, but it means in Arabic, "to cut into small pieces." Hence as a noun, הרמון seems to denote the place in which meat is thus cut. The ה, as *Parkhurst* observes, is evidently radical, as it is preceded by ה servile. This appears to be the best solution of the difficulty.

Amos iv. 5, *And burn incense*, &c., p. 232. The word for incense is not in the form of a verb. Both *Houbigant* and *Horsley* take it here not a verb but a noun: but their transpositions are by no means necessary. The latter part of the fourth verse, and the whole of this, I would render thus,—

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And bring, in the morning, your sacrifices,
In the third year, your tithes,
5. And incense with the leaven of thank-offering,
Yea, publish vows, proclaim *them* ;
For thus ye love *to do*, O children of Israel,
Saith the Lord Jehovah.

Amos v. 24, *And run down*, &c., p. 290.

"But judgment shall come rolling on like waters,
And justice like a resistless torrent."

"That is, the irresistible judgment and justice of God shall come upon those hypocrites like an inundation, and sweep them away like a torrent."—*Horsley.*

Amos vi. 1, *Which have been renowned*, &c., p. 300. Various are the expositions of this and the following line. *Newcome's* version overleaps the rule of grammar,—

"That are named after the chief of the nations,
And to them the house of Israel resort."

The explanation is this,—"They call themselves, not after their religious ancestors, but after the chief of the idolatrous nations, with whom they intermarry contrary to their law." How foreign to everything in the context is this! *Henderson's* rendering is more like a version of the original,—

"The distinguished men of the first of nations,
To whom the house of Israel cŏme."

He considers that the chief persons of the Hebrew nation are here spoken of, to whom the house of Israel, the community, came for judgment: and this has little to do with the context. *Horsley* seems to have given the most literal version, and the most suitable to this place,—

"Marking out the first of the nations,
Go unto them, O house of Israel."

And then the Prophet mentions in the next who these nations were, "Pass over," he says, "into Calneh," &c. So that this distich is connected with the following verses. For

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נקבי, one copy of Kennicott has נקבו, "Mark ye out," or, notice; this would make the line complete. Though the Septuagint here goes much astray, yet it gives the verb used here in the third person plural: and that person in Hebrew is the same as the second person plural of the imperative.

Amos ix. 12, *That possess they may*, &c., p. 407. Both this and the preceding verse are quoted, in Acts xv. 16, 17, not literally, but mainly from the Septuagint, which differs considerably in words, but not in sense, from the Hebrew. *Newcome*, with the view of producing a verbal agreement, has changed and altered the Hebrew text without the authority of a single MS. This is rightly disapproved both by *Adam Clarke* and *Henderson*. The former says, "We must dismiss all these conjectural emendations, and take the Hebrew text as we find it. That it speaks of the *conversion of the Jews* in gospel times, we have the authority of the New Testament; and if we cannot make the *words*, as they stand there, *entirely* to agree with the words here, the *subject* is not affected by it."

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